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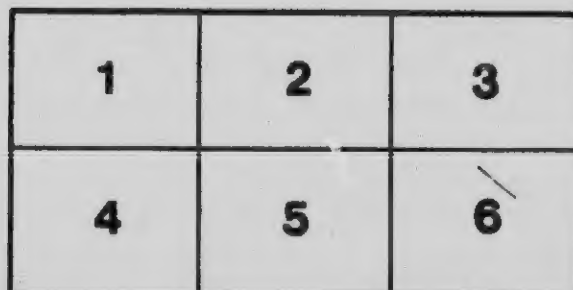
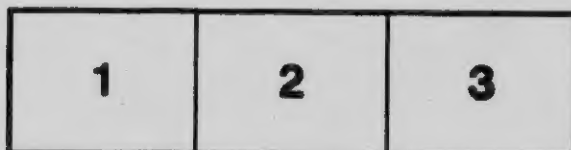
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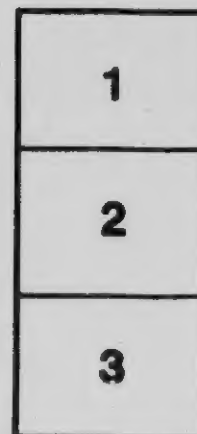
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An' 'twould simplify the matter entirely,
An' 'twould save us so much bother
When we'd both be one another,
So listen now to raison, Molly Brierly."

Old Irish Song.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

*THE Publisher is much indebted
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Mrs. Lindsay for their kind
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from Paintings by

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IRISH LIFE AND CHARACTER



THE JAUNTING CAR

"A beautiful car! Won't your honour go with Shaun Langly? Sorra such a horse from Passage to Waterford. Stand out o' the way, ye pack of impostors! Sure it isn't such a garron as that you'd put before his honour? Look at his shandrum-dandy! Whew! it hangs together by nothing at all!—it'll go to pieces the first bit of bad road that comes in its way; and there'll be plenty of that same, I'll go bail."

This was the first specimen of genuine Irish brogue I had heard for some years, and I felt an indescribable sensation as it fell upon my ear, while once again standing on my native soil. Our reply to the invitation was, "We don't want a car."

"Oh! I ax your honour's pardon. Then it's for you the Swish car is waitin' there all the mornin' forenint us at the side o' the hill. Holloa! Misther Alley's man! Come down, will ye? Here's the English company. Come, step out. He" o! hol-

loo!" And our friend "hollooeed" so loudly that he would have been invaluable as a speaking-trumpet on board the steamboat we had just quitted. In answer to his summons, half tumbling, whole galloping down the hill, came the Swiss car.

I have said that many years had passed since I had found an abiding place in my native land; and sooth to say, I had a sort of intuitive dread that my remembrances would lose much of their *couleur de rose* if brought into actual contact with the realities of Irish life. My poetry and patriotism received a severe shock on perceiving that the inhabitants of Passage had whitewashed the *roofs* instead of the *walls* of their cabins; and that the pigs roved from dwelling to dwelling in unrestrained freedom and loquacity. I wonder what Turner would make of the village of Passage in one of his foregrounds? Would it be possible to idealise it?—that little church upon the hill looks really as if Protestantism was decaying as fast as its adversaries could desire. But then the pigs,—the everlasting pigs,—long-backed, grunting, dirty animals. One would be led to imagine, from a peep into Passage, that Ireland was a vast pig-sty.

"This will never do," thought I to myself, shutting my eyes upon the ugly village of Ballyhack,—on the opposite side of the river,—when fairly stowed away in the very pretty and convenient machine sent for us by our friends. "I shall hate the country before I arrive at my journey's end."

"Is the sun too much in yer eyes, ma'arr dear?" exclaimed a kind voice at my elbow, just as the driver was mounting. "Put up yer *numparal*, my darlint. Yer bonnet's too small, my lady: which, though an advantage to *me*, is the contrary to *you*. It's a beautiful sun, God bless it, for the harvest; but I'm doubtin' 't's as bright over the wather as it is here. Well, glory be to God, they can't take the bames of the sun from us, anyway. There, now you're not *so sinsible* of the heat! A safe and plisant journey to ye here and hereafther! Take the baste asy, Michael, up the hill. Sure Ireland's bothered entirely wid the hills; but the roads are as smooth as wax from this to Bannow." And on we went.

How very, very delightful is a small kindness, garnished by a little bit of flattery. The church upon the opposite hill became absolutely picturesque; and so would have been the village—but for the pigs. An old lady with thirteen young ones had taken undisputed possession of a kish of potatoes under shelter of what was called a cottage *door*, while its kind mistress, intent upon my not being incommoded by the sunbeams, either did not see, or seeing, did not heed, their ravages. I thought of the happy pigs of Mullinavat, who have the clean straw to lie upon, while their lords and masters put up with the dirty; who eat that Irish luxury, a *maley* potato, while their mistresses are content with the damp ones; and who go to bed by candlelight, while the family sit in the dark.

The pretty Swiss car conveyed us to a house where the cordial welcome of people I had never before seen assured me I was *not* in England. I mean no offence to a nation I esteem—ay, and love—more than any other in the world; but I must say the English have not the art of making strangers feel at their ease. The French have acquired it by study; but an Irishman is born with it—it is found in the peasant's hut as well as in nobler dwellings. The moment you set foot on Irish ground, you feel "at home." That domestic epithet is the only one I can find to convey a perfect idea of the freedom and hospitality which prevail there among all classes of society.

When the time came for us to proceed on our journey, it was found that the Swiss car could not take our luggage, so we determined to hire a machine which we heard was "wonderful strong," and a horse that "would go to Bannow and back in less than no time."

Now I am anxious that my experience should warn others against the evils of Irish travelling—at least in so far as concerns the confiding of life and limb to the tender mercies of "an outside jaunting car." Public or private, they are all execrable. Had my English readers ever the good fortune to behold one? If not, let them imagine a long box, elevated upon what are called springs. This long box forms the centre of the machine, and, to confess the truth, is a convenient place for conveying luggage. At each side of the under part of this box

projects a board, which forms the seats; and from these depend narrow, movable steps, upon which it is intended the feet of the travellers shall rest. The driver's seat is elevated over one end of the box, and is generally composed of crooked bars of iron; while the harness, perfectly independent of oil or blacking, is twisted and patched, and tied so as to leave but little trace of what it originally was, either in formation or quality. Upon one of those atrocities was I seated, my feet hanging down upon the "step";—if I leaned back, I bumped my head against the driver's seat; if I sat forward, I must inevitably have fallen upon what our charioteer called "*Bran new powdher pavement*," the said *powdher pavement* consisting of a quantity of red granite broken into lumps the size of a giant's hand, and strewn thickly over the hills and hollows of a most wicked road.

Our party consisted of three. Now, on these cars you are placed *dos-a-dos*, and as three could not possibly sit on a side intended for two, I had half the vehicle to myself; the gentlemen chatting politics on the back *opposite* (to invent an Irishism) seat.

"I hope yer honour's comfortable?" inquired the driver, after a terrific jolt, with that familiar yet respectful manner which distinguishes a race now almost extinct even in primitive Ireland—the race of old servants. "I hope yer honour's comfortable? I think this a dale pleasanter than them Swish cars, though I did my best to make that asy for you this morning."

"Indeed! What did you do to it, Michael?"

"Faith, then, just put half a hundred of stones in the bottom of it, and plenty of straw over them to keep it steady, which you'd ha' never know'd—only I'm afther telling you: these mighty fly-away cars, them *furrin* ones, are not asy and steady like these"—(another terrific jolt that would have destroyed the springs of the best-made London phaeton).—Michael looked round at me, and then repeated, "I hope yer honour's comfortable!" It seemed a bitter mockery of comfort, and yet poor Michael did not mean it so. At last we got over the "powdher pavement," and even the gentlemen congratulated themselves on the event, when, lo and behold! we stood at the foot of what I was told was a "*little hill*." The poor horse eyed it with strong symptoms of dislike.

"It's a fine mornin'," said Mike, pulling the horse to a dead stop.

"So it is," said I.

"Gintlemin, there's a beautiful view from this hill," persisted our driver, "and the sweetest of fresh air—and to walk it up would do ye a dale of good. Ye might travel long enough in England widout comin' across such a prospect."

"Shall I walk also, Michael?"

"Oh, sorra a step! Sure Nimble (that's the baste's name) will go a dale the better from havin' a lady to carry. Gee up, my man! Cushla machree was every inch of ye. N mble, my darlint! it's yerself that *was* the beauty—onct!"

"It is a long time ago, then," replied I, looking with compassion upon the poor long-boned animal.

"Indeed you may say that, lady dear. You see he's kilt entirely with the hard work, and the poor appetite; though that last is lucky, for it's little the man that owns him has to give him to eat."

"How is that, Michael?"

"Faith, it's myself can't tell you, my lady; only *sorrow has long legs*, and his landlord's as hard as the devil's forehead"—(another jolt; I thought the car was broken to atoms).

"Michael, what *is* the matter?"

"Troth, ma'am, we're done for! I wish I hadn't sent the gintlemin on; but you wouldn't have a knife, or a piece of ould leather, or a taste o' rope in yer pocket? Asy, Nimble—bad luck to ye, will ye stand asy? Small blame to the baste to want to get on; there's a black cloud comin' over Knocknaughdowly will soak every tack on our backs in five minutes, and sorra a house nearer than Kilborristhane. Come here, do, you little gossoon. Run afther thim gintlemin, and call thim back; and harkee! give me that piece of string that's round yer hat. Now run, run for the dear life. Och, faith, we're in for it! This harness 'ill never reach Bannow; an' deed an' deed poor Nimble seems unasy."

"Was he in harness to-day, before?"

"He was."

"Did he go far?"

"Not to say far, only three mile. I mean three goin' and three comin'."

"Had he a heavy load?"

"Faith, he had. Mrs. Graham and s^{on} of her children, and two nurses, and the bathin' woman, goin' and comin' to the salt wather, to say nothin' of the fish and stones and things they brings home afther bathin'."

"I think," I replied, jumping off the car, "that I will walk on to the next village, and send you some assistance; it is evident the horse can never achieve the hill."

"God bless you, ma'am dear; isn't he like ourselves, *used to all manner of slavery!* I ax yer pardon! but if yer ladyship would lind me a loan of the string of your cloak, it would mend this little fray in the harness, and the never a bit of harm would I do it."

To Michael's astonishment, I did not feel disposed to part with what he so irreverently termed the *string* of my cloak, but climbed up the hill until I overtook my companions. One of them, a native of the soil, only laughed at my dilemma; he was accustomed to such adventures, and said that within less than a quarter of a mile he should procure a capital horse from a Mr. Matty Byrne; and the poor animal, who had been previously worn out in the service of Mrs. Graham and her courless children, might fare as he best could by the roadside till the jaunting car returned.

We posted on as fast as possible to Master Byrne's, and found his residence in good time—that is, just before the pelting of the pitiless storm had commenced.

"Had he a horse?" "To be sure he had—three—beauties! Would flog the country to produce three such!" "Would he lend it?" "To Mr. Alley troth he would, and the veins of his heart with it, to one of the name;" and immediately he hallooed to a stapping youth, who popped up his head from out a potato pit, and commanded him forthwith to bring "Spanker" from the plough.

Upon this, Mrs. Byrne, the worthy man's mother, a venerable-looking old crone, withered and wrinkled, but whose jet-black eyes glittered and glimmered from beneath her shaggy brows, exclaimed—

"God bless you, Matty! lave Spanker alone, and take Jude—Spanker 'll spill ye intirely."

"Mother, hould yer whisht and mind the paytees. Sure ye know Jude's knees are broke and her hind leg splintered with kicking; barrin' that, she's the finest baste in the country."

"Take Lilly, then," persisted the old lady.

"I think ye might turn yer tongue and say Miss Lilly, considerin' whose daughter she is," retorted Matty.

"The divil fetch me before I say Miss to a horse," continued Mrs. Byrne, "only this I will say, though you are making purty faces at me behind the door, that if you put Spanker under a jaunting car, he'll make it jaunt, that's all."

"Mother dear, hould yer tongue, and I'll bring ye a quarter of tea from Taghmon. What do *you* know about Spanker? Didn't he go under a car from this to Ross and back in six hours, and never

turned into a ditch or a haporth but onct, and that was when he backed off Wellington Bridge?"

"Why, that wasn't Spanker," persisted the crone.

"Well, 'twas his sister," replied Matty: "all the same—the same flesh and blood—they're as like as two peas; only Spanker has a dale more sperit."

The old woman beckoned me aside. "Ma'am dear, for God's sake don't let him get down at any of the houses to have drink. He has been on *the batter* these ten days. Sorra a better boy in the counthry when the drink's not in him; but when it is, he's worse than a troop o' horse, and more roaring and dangerous than a score of mad bulls."

"But our friend's servant will drive."

"Och, musha, don't attempt it; Spanker wouldn't let man or baste drive him, barrin' Matty."

An agreeable position!—the prospect of being dashed to pieces by a mad Irish horse, or upset by a wild Irish driver! There was no help for it.

The shower was over; "the valley lay smiling before us." Michael and the car had arrived; the luggage, which was piled up in what they called—just then very appropriately—*the well*, soaked through. Spanker, a bright bay, bony horse, with an exceedingly quick eye, stood meek and quiet enough at the door. I resumed my seat, and looked on the beautiful prospect, which, as the road was tolerably good, I was enabled to enjoy. To the right stretched St. George's Channel, blue as the heavens that overshadowed it; and sleeping calmly in its waters lay the Saltee Islands, smiling and

gentle, as if no treacherous rock sentinelled their shores. Nearer to the land, rich in many-tinted cornfields, and bordered by soft green meadows, stretched far and away the island of Bannow—my dear native home; and in a glen to the left rose high the arches and turrets of Tintern Abbey. So enchanting was the prospect that we had almost passed unnoticed the pretty village of Saltmill—a miracle of cleanliness and comfort. Roses, vying with ambitious honeysuckles, clambered to the roofs of every cottage—few pigs—no *dirty* children—no dunghills—all as well ordered to the eye as in dear England, and far, far more picturesque. The handsome peasants, in bright red waistcoats and slouched straw hats, confined beneath the chin by a broad black riband, looking animated and intelligent, and withal so polite, so naturally courteous. Then the shy, modest maidens—rosy, awkward, and blushing; totally deficient in that delicacy of form and self-possession which distinguishes the girls of my adopted country, and yet so *Noraish* (if I may be permitted to coin a word), curtsying and smiling, and exchanging glances, and even innocent jests, with the few travellers who pass their way—and yet all with such pure modesty and genuine good-nature that it is impossible to misunderstand either them or their motives.

“Master Byrne,” I inquired, “is your landlord resident here?”

“No, *thank* God, ma’am!”

"Indeed: who is your agent, then?"

"A born gentleman—God's fresh blessing be about him! As long as he is over us, we'll make a free present of the landlord to the English—and much good may he do them!"

At this moment Spanker made a dead stop opposite the door of a small public-house.

"Make the horse go on," said our friend, in a cold, determined tone. Byrne looked round at him precisely with the expression of a dog when disappointed of a long-expected bone.

"He has a *laning* this way," he replied.

"I fear, Byrne, you go there more than once a week."

"Sometimes I do, my lady."

"Every day, Byrne?"

"Not quite intirely, ma'am dear."

"Twice a day, Byrne?"

"Faith, ma'am, if I do, it's Spanker's fault, and not mine. When I gets on his back, thinking a trifle of exercise would do him good, as sure as fate he makes for the public—and no mistake."

"Believe me, it is a ruinous habit."

"No disputin' it, my lady; but ruin has followed ould Ireland so long that it would be heart-breakin' to part company now." We were at the commencement of another hill. "I must trouble ye all to get off," said Byrne. "It would take more wit than would reach from this to Cape Clear to make Spanker go either up or down such a hill as that with anybody behind him."

We submitted to necessity, and walked.

"Byrne," inquired our friend,—who thought it high time that the driver as well as the horse should be "trotted out,"—"what pretty blunder was that you made about the books Miss Caroline told you to bring from the 'Waterford circulating library?"

"Oh, don't *tread on my corns* before the English quality intirely, masther, honey!"

"Very well, Byrne; they will certainly hear the story in Bannow."

"Then I may as well tell it at onct," said Matty. "And sure the mistake was all on her side; for I'll go bail what I brought her was more value than what she wanted.—'Any commands, miss, for Watherford?' says I. 'Yes,' says she; 'go to the library, and bring me Hogg's *Tales*; I want them very much.' 'To the library to fetch hogs' tails!' says I. 'That's a quare place to get them.' 'Not at all,' says she: 'at tne English library. Where else would you get Hogg's *Tales*?' 'Oh, very well, miss,' says I; 'as it's the *English* library, I suppose they keep all *sortings* there.' 'To be sure they do,' says she. 'You won't forget?' Did I ever forget anything you bid me?' says I. 'When I do,' says I, 'it'll be time enough for you to be backbiting me,' says I; 'which is a thing no young lady ought to do to a dacent man.' And off I went in a huff. Well, the bustle of the town and one thing or another bothered me so, that I forgot *where* she said I was to get the hogs' tails; so I walked off to the shambles, and hunted every

stall in the place, but never a man there would cut off the tail of his pig for me, because they all said the *tail* was the beauty of the baste. So, whin I couldn't get the tails, I bought two of the *prettiest bacon faces* you ever saw, thinking they'd do for Miss Car'line as well as the hogs' tails! And to be sure the laugh they riz agin me, for it turned out that what she wanted was a story-book, written by one Mister Hogg—and sure that's a queer name for a Christian! You may get on the car now, ma'am dear. Spanker, stand still, will ye? Up wid ye now, while he's picking Jimmy Rape's barley through that hole in the hedge; for if he knowed you were getting up, all the saints in the calendar wouldn't hold him."

Another mile or two of bad road—*not* powder pavement, however, but an odd jumbling together of sand and stones upon a foundation which had never been properly levelled. Our driver commenced chattering at a great rate. The horse either could not or would not increase his speed beyond a walk; and to the oft-repeated question of "How far are we from Bannow now?" the changes were rung as follows: "Near upon four miles."—"Three miles and a perch."—"Four miles good."—"Whatever you may think, the baste counts it four miles and a quarter." And once, when I inquired of a smith who had left his iron cooling at the door of his forge to run and look at us, he replied, after the true Irish fashion, "Why, thin, is it to Bannow ye're going?"

They certainly are the most amusing and the most provoking people in the whole world. My patience began to ebb. I think—I do not mind confessing it now—but I *do* think I was getting out of humour. I was fatigued beyond the power of saying what fatigue was. The evening clouds were overshadowing us, and the road looking dreary, and the cabins very unlike the sweet cottages at Saltmills.

"How far is it as the crow flies from Ballyhay to Bannow?"

"About three miles."

"And by your road?"

"Faith, ma'am dear, I wouldn't say but it is eleven."

"One would think you delighted in making long instead of short roads."

"So we do—that is, the county does. The longer the road the longer the job—the longer the job the more money for the job-makers."

Our friend asked Mr. Byrne if he had been at the last election?

"Sure was I: and if the horse was in a good humour, I'd make time to tell the lady how below there at Nelson's bridge a pack of rascals wanted to bury me under it for a monument (the bridge, I mean); but I had my revenge out of them (the ringleader). I met him when Andy Capel was with me, and a pick-and-span new hatchet in his hand—and I riz up a discourse with him, and contradicted him twice, which he couldn't abide; so he gave me the lie, *which was all* I wanted for an

excuse to knock him dead in the ditch with Andy's new hatchet. Oh, don't look frightened, lady jewel; 'twasn't with the sharp end I hit him. He wasn't to say hurt, only *fractioned* a little. He'll not give me the lie again in a hurry, that's all."

Suddenly the horse made a dead stop. "What a vicious brute it is!" I exclaimed.

"Ah, now," says Byrne, turning to me with no gentle countenance, "if you wasn't every inch a lady, I'd tell that it was very cruel to call that sensible baste a vicious brute. He has come a'most the whole road wid ye without a kick or a stumble to signify, or a stoppage, or anything but the heart's blood of good manners. Didn't I rare him from a foal, trotting at my knee with my own childer? and hasn't he the sense of a Christian? It's little I thought a lady would turn her tongue to call him a brute."

I wish M'Clise, who has already immortalised his name, while immortalising the humours of his countrymen, had seen our good friend Byrne while pleading the merits of his horse. It was that strange mingling of the ludicrous and the pathetic which brings tears to the eyes while the smile is on the lip. His figure, tall and erect, was drawn to its full height; he stood with his arm resting on the neck of his favourite; and the *picture* he drew of his *reason* for the affection he bore the creature was perfection: "Didn't I rare him from a foal, trotting at my knee with my own childer?" Spanker might have knocked me down after that,

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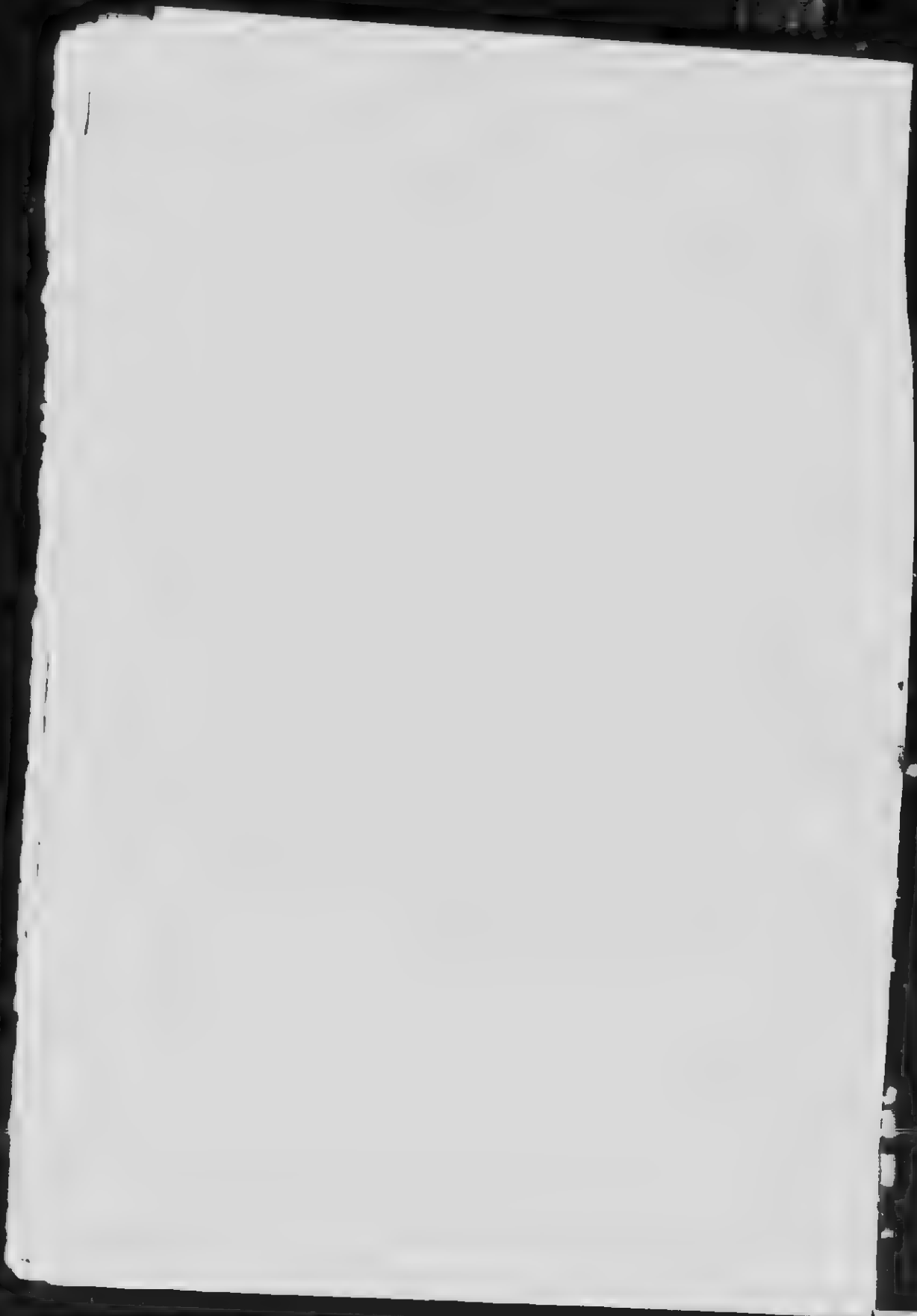
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HOME RULE

From a Painting by

ERSKINE NICOL, R.S.A.





and I would not have called him a brute for the world!

"I believe, ma'am," inquired Matty, after a pause occasioned by the car's jolting so loudly over a quantity of bad road that it would have been impossible for us to hear the discharge of a cannon, "I believe you have no such convenient ways of travellin' in your country as this? You are always shut up in coaches, and such kind of things, so that the fresh air can't get about ye, and you have no sort of exercise. The English people as well as the English carriages are mighty asy-going: there's no such thing as a post-chay used this side o' the country on account of the cars."

The Irish are very cunning, one glance at my countenance convinced Matty that I was not of his opinion, and he immediately tacked about.

"But to be sure they have a mighty purty way of building their houses; and such powers of fine cattle. I had a masther onct, who had two beautiful English horses, and he wanted a careful man to drive them. He was a mighty pleasant gintleman—the sort of masther would knock a man down for the least thing in the world—and so good-hearted when the passion was over. Well, there was as many as fifteen afther the place, and the first that wint up to him, 'Well, my man,' says he, 'how near the edge of a precipice would you undertake to drive my carriage?' So the boy considered, and he says, says he, 'Within a foot, plaze yer honour, and no harm.'—'Very well,' says he, 'go

down, and I'll give ye yer answer by and by.' So the next came up, and said he'd be bound to carry 'em within half a foot; and the next said six inches; and another—a dandified chap intirely—was so mighty nice that he would drive it within 'three inches and a half, he'd go bail.' Well, at last my turn came, and when his honour asked me how nigh I would drive his carriage to a precipice, I said, says I, 'Plaze yer honour, *I'd keep as far off it as I could.*' 'Very well, Misther Byrne,' says he, 'you're my coachman,' says he. Och, the roar there was in the kitchen whin I wint down and tould the joke! Well, I was there better nor two years, and at the end I lost it through a little mistake. I was drowsy one night coming home, and faith the horses had a spile to me, on account of my counthry, and they took a wrong turn, and stuck fast in a gap. And sure it's rewarded I ought to have been instead of punished, for sorra a one but myself would ever have got the horses and carriage out of the gap without a scratch or a brack upon them; but there's no justice in the world!"

As if in illustration of his last sentence, Byrne gave Spanker a smart tap with the whip, which the horse resented immediately, and began to plunge and kick at a most furious rate. How anxiously did I long for the termination of my journey! What visions of well-stuffed pillows and comfortable cushions came upon me. I thought what an exquisite figure we should cut on this broken "shandrumdandy," horse, coachman, and

all, about six o'clock, in the drive at Hyde Park, in the merry month of May. I began to make up my mind that the time of my sojourn in this poor country would be one of extreme discomfort; the road at that particular point afforded no resting-place for hope or sentiment—dark and dirty hovels, fields stretching far and away, covered with that yellow pestilence the plants and blossoms of the *bouclauns*, that devour the strength of the earth. Yet to confess the truth, the county of Wexford, more particularly that portion of it to which I was journeying, and which is advantageously known, through more than one channel, to the English public, affords but comparatively few instances of Irish poverty and Irish crime; and the shadows passed from me as we came in sight of the venerable castles of Clomines, and of the hospitable and beautiful country-seats which still abound in the neighbourhood. How sweet, yet how sad, are the records of the past!—the many years I had spent in dear England were but as a single week—a month—a year at most. Every rock, every tree I recognised—every house, every turn of the road. The changes effected by time and cultivation appeared as nought.

While my heart felt swelling within me, a sad train of thought was broken by our driver exclaiming to one of my companions—

“What did you say, sir?”

“I was observing,” was the reply, “what you can know little about, Matty: that it is supposed the

lost books of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* are still in Ireland."

Byrne cast a contemptuous look upon the gentleman, as well as to say, "Maybe I don't know indeed!" then, with a changed expression of countenance, while with his whip he pointed exultingly to a neat, pretty cottage whose white chimneys peered above the trees which clustered round it, he replied—

"There's the man that has them!"

"What!" exclaimed my companion, in natural astonishment, "do you mean that the man who lives in that cottage possesses the lost books of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*?"

"Faith, I do—mane what I say; the very books. Every book that's *printed* at all at all, he gets, and the *Dublin Pinny Magazine*; and a mighty fine man he is, own brother's son to Father Goram, with a power o' larnin'. And since yer honour's so curos about thim books, shall I step down and say you want a sight of them? He'll lend them to you with all the pleasure in life, I'll go bail."

At first the gentlemen's blank look of disappointment was exceedingly amusing. Matty's earnestness had misled them; they forgot for a moment that an Irishman pretends to know everything—that he is never at fault; and within that moment, brief as it was, visions of the extreme splendour with which the concluding books of the *Faerie Queene* would burst upon the reading public

at this time of poetic drought dazzled their imaginations: even the mention of the *Dublin Pinny Magazine* hardly reduced them to sober prose. Poor Byrne! he was much annoyed at not being permitted to display his friend's store of information to the "strange English."

We had entered upon our last mile; we were in the "charmed district," where the benefits arising from resident landlords, and the advantages of education and cleanliness, are too evident to be for a moment questioned. The roads were smooth and level; plantations fringed the highways; the cottages had severally obtained premiums for superior cleanliness and good order from the Agricultural Society; there were neither beggars nor pigs to annoy the wayfarer; and dozens of well-fed, well-clad peasantry grouped at each other's doors, or sung and chatted beneath the shadow of their own trees and in the perfume of their own gardens. Many who had heard that I was coming pressed forward with tears and kindly greetings; and the opinion was unanimous that I wasn't like the child who had gone away, but I was wonderfully like some who are even yet unforgotten, whose good deeds, like the essence of the flower, have outlived death—who are still spoken of with mingled tears and blessings as the friends of the poor. The tide of Irish affection was flowing rapidly. In such mood, and under such excitement, would I desire the Irish to be seen by strangers.

Poor Spanker had climbed his last hill, and stood panting at the summit. The sun had sunk behind the old church of Bannow, and steeped the ocean in a flood of golden light. What had once been, and still is called, the Moor, lay beneath our feet, gemmed with neat and tranquil cottages, inhabited by contented and cheerful inmates. In the background rose the mountain of Forth, celebrated in the history of the Irish Rebellion; and somewhat in the shadow of the windmill which crowns the hill stood a tall, picturesque figure, his hands folded and resting on the top of his staff, and a pretty little sylph-like girl, of about five or six years old, clinging to the skirt of his coat, which was belted round his waist by a leather belt.

"I'd be mighty grateful to ye, ma'am, if ye'd walk down this bit of a hill. Ye seem to know right well the ould place, and can't mistake it; and I'll lade the baste down. It's small throuble, I'm thinking, to ye to be done with the jaunting car?" said Matty Byrne.

He was very right: the dwelling where I had passed my early days was in my sight; I felt as if I could have pressed unto my heart every stone of those old walls, every leaf of those dear trees. The old man, who I now saw was blind, advanced into our path. I thought I remembered the features. I stopped; he paused also, and took off his hat. I knew him then; I remembered him as a true and faithful servant of my family.

"Is your name Furlong?"

In an instant the staff dropped from his hands, which he clasped together. Tears burst from his poor sightless eyes.

"Sure it is," he replied. "God bless you for remembering me! If you hadn't known me, I'd never have told you who I was. I can't see how tall yer grown; but yer voice is *higher* than it used to be. Oh! the sound of it rises my spirit up to the memory of the good ould times. God be thanked, I hear it once more! Sure I'm gone stone-blind: but may be so best; for I can't see the throuble that's come upon some who I thought war above throuble."

There was so much feeling in this salutation that it was more than I could bear. I was glad to take refuge, and as I hoped for the last time, on the outside jaunting car.

He lived in a cottage by the highway leading to the old church, and apologised for the want of neatness in the exterior of his dwelling: "It isn't my own house at all; the neighbours would build me one if I had the bit of land. The gentry's very good, they can't give to all; but maybe the great landlord will one day look with pity upon me, and give the bit of ground to blind Furlong as he did to blind Brien," was his unrepining observation.

It was, however, on a subsequent visit that a communication of vast import was made to me. I will finish my sketch by relating to my readers the story of the old man, and the discovery to which it led.

"What I want most to say to your honour is this," he observed: "would you be plazed just to take my eldest daughter Nora from me, and bring her up, afther yer own fashion, to be an English-woman. My heart isn't very asy about her here—though she's a good girl—and I'd be very glad she was out of the counthry."

Nora was summoned from an inner room to undergo a personal scrutiny. She came forth with her knitting on her fingers and her face steeped in blushes. I had seldom seen a creature more lovely; yet her beauty was of that peculiar character which neither painter nor author can well describe—resembling a field-violet more nearly than aught else, the charm of which consists partly in its perfume, partly in its colour, but chiefly in the modesty of its aspect and bearing.

My seat was opposite a little window overshadowed by an alder tree. One of the panes was broken, and a portion of a dilapidated hat had been thrust into the aperture. As the blind father discoursed upon what the pretty Nora might, could, would, and should do, I perceived the hat move, at first gently, and finally drop to the ground. I suspected that this was occasioned by some one outside who wanted to hear what was going forward within. The slight noise arrested Furlong's attention, and Nora's blushes deepened when he inquired what it was.

"The cat, father," she replied, "is iver after the bits o' birdeens that build in the tree."

I thought Furlong looked as if he did not quite believe her; and while he expatiated upon the maid's good qualities, and the extraordinary benefits I should derive from confiding in Irish servants, I kept my eye fixed on the window. The poor fellow was so earnest, so anxious I should take his daughter, that I hardly knew how to refuse,—it is very difficult to say "No,"—and all the while there stood Nora, looking so pretty and graceful that I was fairly at fault, when, just at the moment, the face of a singularly handsome youth peeped into the window, and was instantly withdrawn. The motion, though slighter than before, attracted the father's notice, and again he demanded what occasioned the noise. Nora saw I had noted how matters really were; she clasped her hands and looked earnestly at me, and I was both annoyed and amused by the extreme readiness of her reply—

"The mottled hen would never lay an egg but in the thatch, and had just flown up."

I looked very grave, and Nora saw I was displeased. A few minutes afterwards I left the cottage, but had not gone far before I perceived the very youth, leaning over the parapet of a bridge, industriously employed in picking out fragments of mortar and tufts of the pretty maidenhair that crept amid the stones, and throwing them into the stream beneath. As I drew nearer he removed his hat, and making an exceedingly awkward bow, while his blushes were

as deep almost as the cunning Nora's, he inquired—

"If I wanted a boy in London to look after the farm—if I did—he'd go to the world's end to sarve me."

I told him I had not the good fortune to possess a farm, and consequently did not need his services.

"God bless you, ma'am dear, whether or no! but I hope you're not going to take Norry away from us. She'd never be any use in life to you—she's not up to the English ways. Her father thinks she is—but she is not. She'd never do you any good."

"I quite agree with you," I replied, somewhat maliciously, "in thinking her exactly what you say—a girl who will never do any good."

"Oh, blessed Virgin!" he exclaimed, his entire countenance expressing astonishment and displeasure, "I never said that of Norry. She that's been the comfort to her mother, the hands and eyes of her whole family—she that her poor blind father turned against. And for what?—just because she'd a heart with feeling in it. Oh, ma'am dear! if ever you war in love yourself—which, in course, you war—think of poor Norry!" This argument was unanswerable; and the young man followed it up with the "story of his love," in a strain of eloquence and fervour which proved his sincerity. "I am as good as her in the way of family," he continued, "and as to her father talking about her being too young, her mother was younger by seven months

when she married. And hav'n't I"—and he stood firmly on the ground, and stretched his long muscular arms upwards as he spoke—"hav'n't I these four bones to work for her? And if he wants her to travel, why, we'll go to America, and never be beholden to anything or any one but ourselves. God is good! and the world's wide enough to hould all the people—if they'd accommodate each other; but as to saying Norry would do no good, you mistook me, ma'am, intirely. She's a good and a blessing to every one; only, I think somehow she wouldn't suit the English, she's too *lifey* and not used to seriousness."

Here was a love affair! The same evening, as I was meditating upon the *ouvert* opposition of the Irish to the discipline of Malthus, Nora, with streaming eyes, tapped gently at the window of my dressing-room.

"I thought, lady dear," she said, after many pre-fatory hems, "I might as well insense you into the rights of it; for I saw you thought bad o' me for the bit of a lie I tould about the windy. Well, you see, all my life I've had nothing but throuble. The darkness came on my father before I was nine years old, and he lost his sweet temper along with the light, and my mother's heart would have been broken with the crossness, only I come between her and it. Well, I used to lead him about all day, and nurse the children all night, with maybe not a shoe to my foot; but the heart was always light within me for all that, and of a sunny Sunday, Jerry (that's

the boy's name), though he was only a bit of a boy then, use to lend me his shoes that I might go dacent to Mass. "And at last," he says, 'Norry, I had a mind for the sea, but I'll not go—I'll be a shoemaker, as my father was before me, and then you shall never want shoes.' Well, out of that the kindness grew, and my father knew it, but never said a word aginst it until lately, when the crossness overcame him intirely; and then he wanted to send me with you, my lady, which I'd have been proud and happy of, only for Jerry, my lady. Poor boy, he'd take on with the lowness of spirits—so he would!"

"Has he any way of supporting you if you were married?"

"Supporting! Oh, sure two together wouldn't eat more than two by themselves; it's the one expense, married or single. Besides, he has a trade—and if he could get any work——"

This "if" appeared to me of much importance, and I was foolish enough to think of reasoning with a young girl in love.

"What are you to do if he were unable to get any?"

"We could only do as we did before," replied Nora, rolling up the corner of her apron.

"But suppose you had a parcel of children?"

"Oh, it would be a long time first."

"But, again, you would be in the midst of trouble."

"Well, sure it's only what I'm used to."

"I think your wisest plan, Nora, will be to get a situation in some gentleman's family. I will speak to my friends about you. You can save a little money, perhaps,—Jerry might do the same,—and I will make your father promise that then he will not object to your union."

"God bless you, ma'am dear—it's all very true. You see Jerry was mighty kind to me entirely,—he gave me this new handkerchief, and these new ribands,—and his father was as hard upon him as my father was upon me. So, as every one turned agin us, why, we took the more to each other, and—*got married last week!*"

This is the universal finale of Irish love-making; but I was unprepared for it. It electrified me more than the jolting of the everlasting cars which jingle along their highways. The cunning monkey! No wonder Master Jerry should rout the hat out of the window at the idea of his wife's going to England—and she looking so demure and well-behaved all the time. Then she was in such desperate fear about her father's displeasure, and in absolute agony lest "he should turn her from his door without a blessing." When I looked upon her exceeding loveliness, and remembered her youth, my heart melted at the knowledge of the probable misery she would have to undergo; but now I hope better things for her: she sailed last week with her handsome husband for America, and her father blest her and forgave them both ere their departure.

THE BANNOW POSTMAN

"He's taking his own time this evening, I'll say that; for the sun's as good as set, and no sign of him yet. Can you spy him out?"

"No, colleen; how d'ye think my ould eyes could see him whin yours can't? But, Anty, honey, ye're mighty unasy about the postman. D'ye expict a new riban', or a piece o' tape, or some sugar-candy, or—a love-letther, Anty? Oh, Anty, Anty!—don't blush after that fashion: ould as my eyes are, I can see yer rosy cheek getting quite scarlet."

"I'll tell ye what, Grey Lambert," replied the lassie to the old man, who was literally leaning on "the top of his staff," under the shadow of the walls of a singularly fine and perfect castle of ancient days, "I'll jist tell ye, it'll be long enough afore I'll come to see ye agin, out o' pure good-natur, in yer unchristian-like ould place, if ye talk afther that fashion to a young cratur like me, that niver turned to the like. Sure, ye're ould enough to forget love-letthers, any way."

"That's true, Anty; an ould man of threescore and sixteen hasn't much to do wid what are called love-letthers. But maybe there's a differ betwixt

love-letthers and letthers o' love; and sure there's one still that sinds that last to his poor grandfather, and from beyant the salt seas too."

"Well, 'tis a comfort, sure enough, but I often wonder that ye a'n't affeard to stay in such a place as this, without anything wid ye but Bang, the baste, that's almost as ould as yourself—poor Bang!" And Bang pushed his nose into Anty's hand.

There was something picturesque in the appearance of the pair who awaited the postman's coming—for such was really the case. The young maiden expected a lover's letter; the aged man hoped for a remembering token from a solitary descendant. "Grey Lambert," as he was called, had taken up his abode in a corner of the castle under whose shadow they stood—the lonely castle of Coolhull—and no entreaty could induce him to leave. He was a singular, but a fine-looking, person: wore neither hat nor cap; never cut either his beard or hair, which were purely, perfectly white, and flowed over his shoulders and down his breast, even below a leather girdle that encircled his coarse frieze wrapping coat; his feet were bare; his forehead high and bald; his dress clean, betokening singularity, but not poverty; and he had been a traveller in his youth—a sailor—a soldier—some said a pirate; but that, I firmly assert, never could have been the case, for Lambert was the gentlest of old men. Children and animals (who seem to have an instinctive dread of bad people) all loved him; and on Sunday evenings

the village urchins, and their little cur dogs, visited him in his castle, or sat at his feet on the green sward, while he recounted tales and adventures of other lands.

Anty was a merry, laughing, blue-eyed lass, somewhat short, and without one good feature in her face; yet the gipsy was esteemed pretty. It was really very provoking—she was anything but pretty, and yet it was absolutely impossible to look on her face and think so; she had such coaxing smiles, and that heartfelt charm—a sweet, low voice—"an excellent thing in woman," with so many "ah, do's," and "ah, dont's," and a trick of blushing—and blushes, stealing over a pure white skin, are, it must be confessed, very agreeable things to look upon. Then there was a cheerfulness, a joyousness about her perfectly irresistible; at wake or pattern she had all the best boys at her command, and how she laughed at them! But I may affirm—now that she is not before me—the little hussy was anything but pretty.

Bang was certainly a venerable relic of canine antiquity—tall and grey, haughty and stately, of royal Danish descent, and his courtesies had an air of kingly condescension: when he noticed even the bettermost dogs of the parish, there was so much aristocratic bearing about the dignified brute that they one and all shrunk from his approach. But he was faithful to his master—night and day by his side; and always paid particular attention to Anastasia M'Queen, who, strange to say, was a

DON'T PROVOKE ME

From a Painting by

ERSKINE NICOL, R.S.A.

" . . . don't provoke me to do it :
For there's girls by the score
That loves me—and more ;
And you'd look mighty quare, if some morning you'd meet
My wedding all marching in pride down the street :
Troth, you'd open your eyes,
And you'd die with surprise,
To think 'twasn't you was come to it."

Sam Lover.



very frequent visitor at the dilapidated castle—nay, was almost daily seen trudging towards it, her short scarlet cloak meeting the broad hem of her blue stuff petticoat, while the hood only half covered a profusion of deep nut-brown hair (I feel it here a duty to my country peasant girls to say that they generally have long and most luxuriant tresses, and, womanlike, are not a little proud of them); while from her well-turned but red arm usually hung a basket, containing such presents as a Bannow maiden could present—dried fish, fresh cockles, delicate butter, barley or oaten cakes, thin and curling, or new-laid eggs. She certainly paid very great attention to the old man, and he was very much attached to his lively visitor.

"Maybe it's long since ye heard from young Pat Lambert?" she inquired, after caressing Bang.

"True, love dear; it seems long to one like me—a poor ould, very ould, man. Maybe he's forgotten his grandfather."

"No, *that* he's never done, I'm sartin sure. He's as thrue-hearted a boy as iver crossed the sea; that I know, and I take it very unkind o' ye to say he'd forget you."

"Well, Anty, whin I write agin I'll tell him that ther's some don't forget *him*, any way."

"Oh!" said Anty, blushing in good earnest, "ye need not say that: sure, in a Christian country, everybody remimbers their neighbour.—How beautiful the sea looks, as if there niver was an end to it?"

"How beautiful the sea looks!" repeated Grey Lambert, smiling, and shaking his head at the same time. "Well, Anty, I see ye're an admirer o' the beauties of natur. The sea is ever beautiful to my thinking: whin the great waves foam and lash the shore, and whin they toss big ships, such as you niver saw, up and down without any trouble in life—then 'tis beautiful; and whin it sleeps under the setting sunbames, as it does now, it is beautiful. How well ye see the entrance into Watherford harbour from where ye stand!—though a score o' miles and more from ye. Well, I love this ould castle for the prospect; but it's a grand place, and now I niver could think to live anywhere else. The thickness of the walls might be one of the world's wonders; then the gomety staircase, and the curious writing on the hard stones that nobody iver understood yet; and the grate oak bames. The jewil of a castle, ye are, my darlint!—to think how bravely ye stood against ould Oliver, the black villain! Och! many a brave heart, many a bright eye, many a smile dancing like the sunbames on the sea, has been in ye, whin ye stood with yer high walls and turrets in the morning light; but now ye're ould, and even yer stones look withered, and the cow and the wild goat shelter where princes stood; and the owl screams where the harp sounded; and I, a poor worm of the earth, live to see it, whin their noble bones make part of the sod I stand on!"

Lambert's apostrophe to his beloved castle was

lost on Anty, who eagerly exclaimed, "There he is—there he is! Now I'll run and meet him, and see if he has got a letther for you." Away she flew, swift as an arrow, to meet John Williams, postman and, it may be truly said, carrier, to the united parishes of Bannow, Kilkaven, and Duncormuck, for above thirty years. Even in these isolated spots people cannot do without news; it is almost necessary to existence. Twice each week John Williams still journeys to the nearest post-town, and conveys "the leading journal of Europe," the *Fashionable Post*, the Wexford and Waterford papers, and others, to the news-loving inhabitants. Honest John is a heedless, good-tempered fellow, but a very jewel of a postman. He had been originally engaged only as a circulating medium for letters from Wexford to Bannow; but he was either bribed or coaxed, or both, into executing commissions for everybody who had commissions to execute. John Williams's list was regularly made out; and ribands, tea, candles, sugar, books, paper, music, gowns, and even caps, garnished his Rosinante—for when his orders were many, John was obliged to take his steed. Not that he ever ventured to ride the poor lame beast, whom he could out-tire at any time; but he walked in a companionable manner with it, in and out of Wexford—and, in truth, their caparisons were most extraordinary.

When Anty met him, his loose drab coat was hardly secured by a solitary button, and his leather

bags dangled over his shoulders; his "cawbeen" on one side of his grey shaggy head, his scratch wig on the other, and his "doodeen" serving a double purpose—keeping his nose warm, and exhilarating his spirits; the poor horse, more fatigued than its wiry conductor, eyeing the green straggling hedgerows and the close turf, and loitering to catch a mouthful as he passed. At either side his neck hung two blue bandboxes, filled, doubtless, with multifarious finery; while a coil of thick cable, like a huge boa, passed over his head, and held, suspended, ten or twelve flats of cork, bespoke by the captain of a coal vessel lying at Bannow quay, three new kites, four skipping-ropes, ten tops, two bags of marbles, a dozen slates (for Master Ben), a pair of pole screens (for the lady at the big house), and some blankets—all, of course, so carelessly papered that they had more than half escaped from their confinement.

"Good-even, and God save ye, Mister John!" quoth the breathless lass. The postman was never given to much speaking, and nodded. "Maybe ye wouldn't have a bit of a letther for Grey Lambert?" John stopped, and so did the horse; while John took from his bag a long, narrow, dirty-looking letter, presented it, replaced his bag, and journeyed on. Anty stopped, and looked after him. "John, John, I want to speak to ye." John again stopped. "I wanted to ask ye, if so be that ye found—I mean met—a—a—I

thought, maybe, ye might have—ah, John! ye know what—for poor Anty?” John took the pipe from his mouth, and simply said—

“Maybe ye’d tell a body who likes plain spak-
ing what ye’re after?”

“Well, thin, John, have ye a lettther for me?”

“Yes. Why didn’t ye ask me that a while ago, and not give me the throuble of taking off my bag twice?”

“Why didn’t you give it me, and I to the fore? Sure ye knew ye had it.”

“Why, look ye, Anty M’Queen, I have been thirty years a postman, and I have always done what the back of the lettther tould me; and see, the direction on it is: ‘Anty M’Queen, Hill Side, Bannow, County of Wexford, Ireland—post-paid—to the care of John Williams, Bannow postman; to be kept till called for.’ Sure it was no business o’ mine to give it ye till ye called for it, or, what I consider the same thing, asked for it.”

Anty took the letter, and, placing it in her bosom, turned towards the old castle, to give to Grey Lambert his epistle. John pursued his path, until he arrived at the village “public.” There, what a crowd awaited his coming! “John, what’s the news?”—“John, the paper.”—“John—oh, John, don’t mind ’em, but give me my cap! I hope it isn’t in that bandbox that’s had the dance in the mud! There—John, honey—don’t ‘squeege’ it so!—sure no cap can bear a ‘squeeging!’”—“John, is my bonnet come? Och! meal-a-

murder! what made Miss Lerady put an orange riban' in my beautiful English straw?"—"John, I hope ye didn't forget the tobaccy?"—"John, agra—the two ounces o' green tay for my granny."—"John, my twinty-four marbles."—"John, och, John! and sure it's not come to that wid ye, that ye'd forget the green silk handkerchief!"—"John," said a fine-looking fellow, pushing through the circle, "John, did ye get the thing I tould ye of?" John winked, and from his waistcoat pocket drew forth a very little parcel, wrapped up in white paper. The young man took it, smiled, and soon after there was a bustle at the far window; for the parcel contained a plain gold ring, which the saucy youth was endeavouring to try on the finger of pretty Letty, the gentle daughter of mine host of the "public."—"John, any letthers for me?" inquired the bustling man of the big shop.—"One, Darby, very like a bill."—"Humph!" said Darby.—"Did ye bring the doctor's stuff for father?" asked Minny Corish.—"Och! murder-in-Irish! sure ye're not afther forgetting the five yards o' red stuff," exclaimed no less a person than Mrs. Cassidy herself, "and I wanting to quilt it for a petticoat, to keep my ould bones from freezing!"—"John," said a village loungee, who expected nothing, and yet wanted to say something—"John, why d'ye wear yer wig over yer hair?"—"Why," replied John crily, "sure ye wouldn't have me wear my hair over my wig."—"John, I take shame that I didn't offer ye this afore," and the landlord pre-

sented a large glass of whisky to the postman, who drank it off, remarking afterwards, "Thru Parliament, to be sure," which raised a general laugh.— "Come, John, ye're enough to set a body mad," said fussy Tom Tennison, who was ever in a bustle about something or other. "Master Ben has been here more nor an hour, waiting to rade us the news, and there ye stand, taking the things out as asy as—— Can't ye give us the paper?" "No—I say no—not till it's yer turn, Mister Fussy. Take the patthren o' yer manners from Mister Ben; see how quiet he stands, as the song says, 'tall and straight as a popilar tree,' and two of his bran-new slates cracked by that devil of a horse. Arrah, don't be bothering me, all o' ye; ye forget, so ye do, that I have five or six places to go to yet. If ye taze me afther this fashion, hang me, but ye must get another postman. The moment ye see me, ye're like a pack o' Curnel Riggot's hounds in full cry afther a hare. Can't ye larn patience? Sure everybody knows it's a vartue."

John's next resting-place was the Parsonage; such a lovely spot—just what a parsonage ought to be. Only look, is it not perfectly delicious? That softly swelling meadow, over which the evening mist is stealing, paled off from the mossy lawn that fays and fairies might delight to revel on; the lowly, yet elegantly thatched, cottage; the greenhouse, the flower borders—did you ever see such splendid flowers?—there—such balsams—such peonies—such a myrtle—such roses! rose

red, white, pure white, the maiden's blush, the damask, and the many-coloured Lancaster, not rivalling each other, but uniting to charm sight and smell by their combined beauty and fragrance. Ah! there is Marianne amongst the lilies, fit model for a sculptor, alike lovely in person and mind. And the eldest, Henrietta, noble and dignified, though very different from Marianne; conscious of her magnificent beauty, yet condescending and benevolent to the poorest peasant. Then Ellen, the youngest: not the handsomest, but certainly the most useful; a perfect Goody Two-shoes, with more wisdom at fifteen than most women at fifty. The postman is to them all a most welcome visitor. "Oh, John, is it you? Do give me papa's and mamma's letters."—"Oh, don't, Marianne!" said the young Ellen. "Don't take them all yourself; do let me have the newspapers, at least, to give papa."—"John," inquired Hetta, "the netting-silk, and the silver bodkin—I hope you have chosen a nice one—and the two skipping-ropes for my sisters—thank you."—"All right, I hope, miss?"—"Thank you, all quite right. Will you come up and take something, John?"—"No, miss, I humbly thank ye, all the same."—"John, tell me—have you got a letter for poor Mrs. Clavery?"—"Yes, miss."—"Ah, now I *am* happy. Poor woman, she will be so delighted!"

"There," thought John to himself, as he passed on, "there, that is what I call the true breed of the gentry. Such a born beauty as that to think

of a poor sorrow-struck woman! Ah, the thick blood without any puddle, for ever!—That's the sort that warms the heart."

Mrs. Clavery's story will be best told in her own words, as she herself related it to the family at the Parsonage a few months before John brought her the letter that made Miss Henrietta so happy.

One tranquil evening in autumn, a pale, delicate young woman rested her hand on the gate that opened to the green sloping lawn which fronted the Parsonage house: uncertain whether or not she might venture to rise the latch, she gazed wistfully on the group of children who were playing on the green. Although in the veriest garb of misery, there was nothing of the common beggar in her appearance; and the two little ones who clung to her tattered cloak were better covered than their mother. She carried on her back a young, sickly-looking infant, and its weak cries arrested the attention of the good pastor's youngest daughter, who bade her enter, in that gentle tone which speaks of hope and comfort to the breaking heart. How much is in a kindly voice! When the woman had partaken of food and rest, and remained a few days at the Parsonage, she thus told her tale:—

"May God reward ye!—for ye have fed the hungry, and ye have clothed the naked, and ye have spoken of hope to her that thought of it no more; and ye have looked like heaven's own angels on one who had forgot the sight o' smiles.

May God's fresh blessing be about ye!—may ye never want! But a poor woman's prayer is nothing; only I am certainly sure the Almighty will grant ye a long life, and a happy death, for your kindness to one who was lone and desolate in a cold world. It's little matter where one like me was born, only I came of decent, honest people, and it could not be said that any one belonging to me or mine ever wronged man or mortal. The boys were brave and just; the girls well-looking and virtuous—seven of us under one roof; but there was full and plenty of everything—more especially love, that sweetens all. Well, I married; and I may say a more sober, industrious boy never broke the world's bread than my Thomas—*my Thomas!* I ask yer pardon, ladies; but my heart swells when I think that maybe he's gone to the God who gave him to me, first for a blessing, then for a heart-trial."

The poor woman wept; and the father of the family she was addressing, adopting the figurative language which the Irish so well understand, observed, "The gardener prunes the vine even to bleeding, and suffers the bramble to grow its own way."

"That's true; thank ye, sir, for that sweet word of comfort," she replied, smiling faintly. "It's happy to think of God's care—the only care that's over the poor, though it seems ungrateful to say that to those who are so extraordinary kind to me. Well, we had a clane cabin—a milk-white

cow—a trifle of poultry—two or three pigs—indeed, every comfort in life, according to our station, and thankful we were for them. Time passed as happy as heart could wish, and one babe came, and another; but the eldest now was the third then, for it pleased God to take the two first in a fever; and bad, sure enough, was the trouble, for my husband took it, and there he lay, off and on, for as good as four months; and then the rint got behindhand, and we were forced to sell the cow: one would think the baste had knowledge, for when she was going off to the fair (and by the same token it was my brother-in-law's sister's son that druv her), she turned back and mowed—ay, as natural s a child that was quitting the mother. Well, we never could raise the price of a cow agin, and that was a sore loss to us, for God sent two young ones the next time, and betwixt the both I could niver get a minit to do the bit o' spinning or knitting that the landlord's wife expected as a yearly compliment. She was not a born lady; and they're the worst to the poor. Musharoon gentry! that spring up and buy land, hand over head, from the raale sort, that are left in the long-run without cross or coin to bless themselves with, all owing to their generosity. Well, to make up for that, I was forced to give up some of my best hens, as duty fowl, to the lady, on account that she praised their handsome toppings. That wasn't all: the pigs got the measles; and we might have sould them to advantage, but my

'husband says, says he, 'Mary, we have had disease and death in our own house; but don't let us be the means of unwholesome mate, upon no account—because it brings ill-health, and we to answer for it when nothin' will be to the fore but honest deeds and the roguish ones, straight against each other, and no one to judge them but the Almighty—the ONE who knows the rights of all;'—that was true for him. Well, we might have got up agin, for my poor Thomas worked like any negur to the full; but just after we had sowed our little field of wheat (it was almost at the corner of the landlord's park, and we depinded on it for the next gale day), nothing could sarve the landlord but he must take it out of our hands, without any notice, to plant trees upon. I went to my lady, and, to soften her like, took what was left of my poor fowls—the cock and all—as a present. She accepted them very genteelly, to be sure, and promised we should have another field and compensation money. We waited and waited, but no sign of it. At last my husband made bould to go to the landlord himself, and tould him all that had passed between the lady and me. 'Don't bother me, man,' was the answer he made. 'Compensation, indeed!—what compensation am I to have for being out of my rent so long, the time ye were sick, and ye without a lase? And I am sartin my wife never promised anything of the sort to the woman.' 'I ask yer pardon, sir,' replied Thomas, civil of course—for Thomas was always civil to rich or poor; 'but she

did, for my Mary tould me.' 'She tould you a lie, then,' said the landlord; and my husband fired up. 'Sir,' said he, 'if ye were my equal you dar'n't say the likes o' that of my Mary; for though she's not of gentle blood, she's no liar!' Then the landlord called my husband an impudent blackguard; and Thomas made answer that he, being a gentleman, might call him what he pleased; but that none should say that of his wife that she did not deserve. However, the upshot of the thing was, that we got warning to quit all of a sudden: but there was no help for it; as the neighbours said—true for them—that Thomas was by no means so strong a man as before the fever; and the steward found out some stranger who offered money down on the nail for the land that we had in such prime order. Every one cried shame on the landlord, but sure there's no justice for the poor! 'Twas a sorrowful parting, for somehow a body gets fond of the bits of trees even, that grow up under their eye; and I was near my lying-in, and the troubles came all at once, and all we could get to shelter us was a damp hole of a place. My husband got plenty of work; and though it wasn't in natur not to lament bygone comforts, yet sure the love was to the good, firm—ay, firmer than ever—and no blight was on our name, nor isn't to this day—thank God for it!—for nobody breathing can say, Thomas, or Mary, Clavery, ye owe me the value of a thraneen. Oh, but that's a fine thing and a cheering after all! Well, the change of air, and

the fretting, and one thing or other, made me very weakly; and we lost the fellow-twin to this one. It was happy for the darlint; but it was heart-scalding to see it peeking and peeking—wastin' and wastin', and to want the drop of wine or the morsel of mate that might keep it to be a blessing to its parents' grey hairs. It was then, just after my child's death, that, to drive the sorrow from his heart, Thomas took a little to the drop; and yet he wasn't like other men, that grow cross and fractious—he was always gentle to me and the young ones. But in the end it ruined us, as it does all who have any call to it—for he was as fine a young man, though I say it, as ye could see in a day's walk—standing six feet two in his stocking vamps, and admired for his beauty. And he went to the next town to sell my little spinning, that I had done to keep the dacent stitch on the childer; and, as was fated, I suppose, who should be there but a recruiting sargent—and when the drink's in, the wit's out, and he listed—listed!—And the parting—oh, but I thought the life would lave me! Sure I followed him to the place of embarkment, and there they druv me from him; and I stood on the seashore, and saw him on the deck of that black ship, his arms crossed over his breast like one melancholy mad; and it was long before I believed he was really gone—gone—gone; and that there was no voice to cheer me—for *these* did nothing but cry for food. It was wicked, but I wished to die, for my heart felt breaking. The

little left me was soon gone. I was among strangers—I could not bear to go to my own people or place, because I was more like a shame, and my spirit was too high to be looked down on. I have travelled from parish to parish, doing a bit of work of any kind when I could get it, and trusting to good Christians to give something to the desolate children when all else failed."

"Have you never heard from your husband?"

"Oh, sir, he sends his letters to Watherford, to the care of one I know; but I cannot often hear, the distance is so great."

"Did he not forward you money?"

"Three pounds: but we owed thirty shillings of it, betwixt rent for the last hole we lived in, and two or three other matters. I was overjoyed to be able to send the money, for the debts lay heavy on my heart; and, to be sure, the children wanted many a little thing, and the remainder soon went."

The good pastor and his family were deeply interested in Mary Clavery's simple tale; and on further inquiry, its truth was fully established. It was also found that her husband was in a regiment then at Jamaica, commanded by the clergyman's brother, a gallant and distinguished officer. The story circulated very quickly in a neighbourhood where every little circumstance is an event; and to the credit of my favourite Bannow, be it known that, on the very same Sabbath morning, in the

Protestant church and Catholic chapel, a collection was made for the benefit of the distressed family. Another week saw Mary and her children in quiet possession of a two-roomed cabin; the parish minister and parish priest conversing at the door as to the best manner of procuring the industrious woman continued employment; and the three young ladies busily engaged in arranging new noggins and plates, and all manner of cottage furniture, to their own sweet taste. Then Farmer Corish gave Mrs. Clavery a sack of potatoes; Master Ben engaged to "teach" the children for nothing; Mrs. Cassidy sent as her offering a fine fat little pig; Mrs. Corish presented a motherly, well-educated goose, capable of bringing up a numerous family respectably; good Mr. Rooney, as considerate and worthy an old bachelor as ever lived (how angry I am with *good* men for being old bachelors!), sent her a sitting hen and seven eggs—in short, the little cottage and garden were stocked so quickly, and yet so well, and the poor woman was so grateful, that she could hardly believe the reality of what had occurred. Her kind friends at the Parsonage, however, saw that something more was wanting to make their protégé perfectly happy. What that was, need I tell?—my lady readers have surely guessed it already, and even the gentlemen may have found it out. The clergyman, without acquainting Mrs. Clavery, had written to his brother, mentioning all the particulars, and begging Thomas's discharge. The

GREGORY

From a Painting by
ERSKINE NICOL, R.S.A.





last post had brought him a letter stating that his request was granted.

But the three graces (as my young friends of the Parsonage were always called) denied themselves the pleasure of communicating the joyful tidings, leaving the expected letter from Thomas Clancy himself to tell the news. They could not, however, forego the gratification of witnessing the joy the cottagers would feel when the information was communicated that the husband and the father was on the homeward journey, and they hastily followed the postman to Mary's abode.

John's next resting-place was at an old weather-beaten but spacious mansion, somewhat out of the Bannow district, and close on the beach. It belonged to a gentleman whose health obliged him to reside for a time on the Continent, but who had lent his house to his relative, Sir James Horatio Banks, M.P., for the summer, as the sea-bathing is very good all along the Wexford coast: consequently, Sir James Horatio, his lady, and all his little ones and servants, were, fortunately, only birds of passage. I beg that this fact may be clearly understood, as I would on no account have the family confounded with our own dear resident gentry. Sir James Horatio Banks, M.P., was a great man in his own way, and a strange way it was. Anything but a spendthrift, in the usual acceptation of the word, and yet in perpetual embarrassments; for he was always at law;—never, to do him justice, missed an opportunity of

litigation, whether for a thousand pounds or a thousand pence, an estate or an acre. Long Chancery suits were his delight, and he anticipated Term with absolute rapture. Most people complain of the law's delays. Not so Sir James Horatio Banks. He was always anxious to retard its decisions; so much so that he was once designated, in open court, "a filthy pebble in the wheel of justice." He stood a contested election, or rather, Lady Banks got him through it, and triumphantly *speechified* on the hustings; but the many thousands expended on that memorable occasion would have broken his heart to a certainty if, fortunately, three fresh lawsuits had not thence arisen to console him. It was some comfort to the Irish to discover that his mother had been a native of Wales; for he was very mean in his household expenses, which, they asserted, could not have been the case had he been "raale Irish." In truth, he had a miserly aspect: a thin, spare body, covered with a parchment-like skin; a rattish expression of countenance; and little peering grey eyes that seemed eternally seeking for flaws in everything. He used to ride a bony black horse, and always wore overgrown jackboots, a threadbare long coat, a flapped hat,—that sometimes answered the purpose of an umbrella,—and invariably fastened a pair of horse-pistols to the pommel of his saddle. One of our Bannow poets made the following rhyme on the worthy member, and contrived in a crowd to tie

them to the tail of his horse. How he mourned that he could never discover the author!—

“The Divil Sir Jimmy to Parliament sint;
To plaze his master, Sir Jimmy he wint,
On his ould black horse, that looked like a hack:
Success! cried the boys; may ye never come back!”

Indeed, the peculiarities of the family afforded much amusement to the neighbourhood where they resided for a time. Lady Banks was the very opposite of her husband: possessed, as a brother sportsman once said of her, “blood, bone, and beauty”; wore a scarlet riding-habit; hunted in grand style—was always in at the death; sung songs after supper; loved claret; never scrupled at an oath; called Sir James “her little man”; always saw the horses fed; obliged her girls to stand fire, her boys to go barefoot to make them hardy; and obtained for herself, amongst the country people, the universal sobriquet of “Man Jack.” Perhaps all these eccentricities might have been forgiven had she possessed the kindly feelings of her sex, for she was young and handsome: but she was neither an affectionate mother nor a sincere friend; she loved to dash and astonish, and left a family of beautiful children to the management of a French lady’s-maid and head groom.

The postman’s arrival was a matter of great importance to the household, as Sir James always expected letters, and the family had many wants to be supplied. Ma’m’selle Madeline had de-

scended to the servants' hall to await John's coming, and two or three of the younger children accompanied her; on a table, in the centre of the apartment, Miss Julia, a lovely girl of five years old, was dancing a jig to the great amusement of two or three men-servants, who sung St. Patrick's Day to "plaze the jewil"; Carlos and Henry, two younger urchins, were riding a magnificent Newfoundland dog; the groom and the footman were playing cards at a small side-table near the fire, and near it was a jug of whisky punch, to which the butler, housekeeper, and coachman frequently resorted. Ma'm'selle Madeline looked contemptuously on them all, until roused from her reverie by the butler's inquiring "if Miss Maddy wouldn't taste a drop of the genuine—betther, ten to one, nor all the wine that iver sailed out of France?" "Non, Merçie, bien, tank you, monsieur—ver oblige, mais—but I ha'de horreur great to your ponch. Faugh!—excuse moi—'tis von great bad shmell. —Faugh!"—and the lady's-maid refreshed her nose with "Eau de Luce," much to the amusement of the servants. "Oh, John!—welcome, John!"—"Oh, Monsieur John, you not be come at last."—"John, the rings for the pigs." John here, John there, John everywhere, as usual. At length, the papers and letters were piled on the table, and Ma'm'selle Madeline had received, and disappeared with, her bandboxes. "Larry," said the butler to the footman, "take up the papers—why don't

ye?" "Let them wait till I've looked at them myself," replied Larry. "I want to see what news from the Curragh, as my lady has a heavy bet on Captain Lofty's sorrel coult." "Any news of the law business?" inquired the steward. "How do I know, or what do I care?" replied Larry. "What does it signify whether law actions are gained or not?—don't we all know what comes over the divil's back must go under——" "Dacency!" screamed the cook. "All I know," observed the steward, "is——"

"I'll tell ye what, boys," said John Williams, "ye'd better mind yer business, and take the letthers up, out of hand; for Sir James and my lady both saw me coming down the avenue."

"Och, murder, John!—why didn't ye tell me so before. By the powers, 'Man Jack' 'll bate my brains out!" and the footman hurried off amid the laughter of his fellow-servants.

"Any news, Sir James?" inquired the lady, as she tried on a new velvet hunting-cap.

"Yes, my dear. I've just received the bills for my last suit in the King's Bench."

"You lost the cause, I think."

"Yes, owing to the hurry that Counsel Playdil was in—never can take his time about anything."

"What's the damage?"

Poor Sir James groaned. "It will stand me in, one way or other, eighteen hundred and thirty-seven pounds, fourteen shillings, and threepence farthing."

"The devil it will!" exclaimed the lady, laying down the hunting-cap. "I wonder, Sir James, you don't at once take my advice: have done with the law, and the torment of it. I'll bet ten to one you'd be as happy again. Oh, if you had my spirit!"

Sir James thought, perhaps, that she had enough for both. A pause ensued, and at length the M.P. began: "My dear Lady Banks, do you know that Major M'Laughlin's filly has won the cup?"

"Then I'm in for a cool hundred, that's certain, or else there's some foul play. Curse me, though," continued the lady, "but I'll find it out!—a colt like Lofty's!—such a chest—such action—such limbs! Why, M'Laughlin's was no more to be compared to it—but it's all your fault, Sir James. I never have my own way. I ought to have been on the race-ground; but here you would stick and vegetate like a cabbage—except, indeed, in Term time. You don't care what's spent on lawsuits."

"Sdeath, madam, were it not for the law we should be ruined, your extravagance is such. You never ask the price of anything. Hadn't I to go to law with your habit-maker for his overcharges?"

"Oh yes!—and to pay three-and-thirty pounds more than the original bill."

"Well, but *still I had the law*, and I showed the fellow I could not be imposed upon. Oh, Lady Banks, Lady Banks! I wish you were less extravagant! We must retrench. Do you know, were I not a Member of Parliament, I should be in a jail. Think of that, Lady Banks!—in a jail!"

"Well, and have you not to thank me for your election? Who in their senses would have sent *you*, little man, to be a representative, if it hadn't been for my canvassing? The House would be half memberless if only those sat there who paid their debts!" — and she laughed loudly. "Your law tells you that the M.P. is a cloak against bailiffs! *Vive le plaisir!* Why, you don't expect me to turn mourner, and spend my allowance only—like a schoolgirl?—a woman of my spirit! *Pardonnez moi!*" She was leaving her husband surrounded by letters, all demanding money, when some idea or sensation occurred that stopped her on the threshold. "Sir James, Madeline tells me that Caroletta is ill. Perhaps the child wants change of air; she grows fast—is getting quite womanly. You had better send her to your sister at Portarlinton for a time. I have not a moment to attend to it, but as she is your pet, I thought I would mention it." The lady went to look after horses, and the gentleman (who certainly loved his family) to inquire after his eldest child, whom he well knew not to be her mother's favourite, because she was growing so tall and handsome that the vainglorious woman dreaded a rival.

By the time our useful postman had completed his rounds (for he had much to do after he had left the Honourable Member's house) the moon was high in the heavens, and John and his steed had ensured sound slumbers by active exertion. There were many, however, who woke, and some who

wept, while the stars sparkled in the blue sky, and the unruffled ocean murmured along the shore. How different is night in the country from night in town! Oh for my native hills by moonlight!—the very breeze tells of repose, and the lone and beautiful clouds, passing so silently along the heavens that they

“—— seem to be
Fair islands in a deep blue sea,
Which human eyes at eve behold;
But only then, unseen by day,
Their shores and mountains all of gold.”

At the Parsonage the three sisters were chattering, as only girls can chatter, arranging further plans to benefit the poor and needy; and even while their hearts were uplifted to the Giver of all good, they sank into the sweet slumbers of innocence.

A trembling light, that issued from Mrs. Clavery's window, showed she was still awake. Seated by the bedside, where her three little ones, their arms twined around each other, slept the refreshing sleep of childhood, she read, for the last time that night, the lines which her husband's hand had traced; and feeling how sweet it was to have near her anything that came from a beloved object, placed the letter under her pillow, and then, while earnest, silent tears coursed each other down her cheeks, prayed that an all-directing Providence would guide her husband in safety over the wide waste of waters.

Lady Banks had just finished her last song, after supper, which was loudly applauded by the very mixed company that sat around the board, while her husband looked gloomy enough at the foot of the table, meditating on his long debts and neglected daughter.

Our old friend, "Grey Lambert," and his faithful Bang, were soundly sleeping in the castle, while the breeze that moaned along the decaying walls was to them as a sweet and soothing lullaby.

Anty M'Queen—poor Anty!—she slumbered not. Her father's cottage was on the hillside, and a very neat cabin it was; well filled, too, with children of all ages and sizes, from Anty, the eldest, who, in her own opinion, was quite old enough to be married, down to a fat, rosy "lump of a boy," who, although hardly able to crawl, fought manfully with the pig for every potato it took into its mouth. The household, with the exception of Anty, were all fast asleep, and, from the nature of her dress (according to the fashionable acceptance of the word, she might have been called full dressed) it would seem she had been in bed; however, there she sat over the dying embers of the fire, an end of candle stuck in a scooped potato, that served as a candlestick, and an open letter in her hand, which she turned one way and then another without being able to comprehend a single word of its contents.

Poor Anty!—it was only when she had received from the postman the long-expected epistle, it

occurred to her that she was utterly unable to peruse it. Indeed, she could hardly decipher print. But as to writing—she never even had a pen in her hand in her life. Had she been inclined to make confidants of her father and mother, she would have been precisely in the same dilemma, for they were equally ignorant; and bitterly did she regret the obstinacy of her disposition, which prevented her hearkening to Master Ben when he counselled her to become a scholar. Grey Lambert, she knew, would at once have read every word of it, “for he had grate larning”; but, unfortunately, as her sweet-heart was no other than his grandson, she did not exactly wish him to have so much subject-matter to jest her about. She had taken the letter to Mary-the-Mant, who, next to Peggy the Fisher, perhaps knew more about the love affairs of the neighbourhood than anybody else; but Mary-the-Mant was not at home—gone to Waterford—would not be back for three days! Master Ben then occurred to her. But, no!—she could not bear him to read it for her. Not that he would laugh; but he would feel no interest, and perhaps find fault, with the skill of a practised critic, and condemn the spelling and diction of her beloved letter without mercy. What could she do? Letty Connor—she was well-educated; but then she had been a sort of rival of hers, and she did not wish her to know anything at all about the matter. John Williams? No; he would make fun of her in his own quiet, sly way. What should she do?—There she sat over the fire, twisting

and turning the manuscript, that looked, to tell the truth, like a collection of strange hieroglyphics more than anything else; and, after much consideration, Anty resolved on two things: one, even to take the letter to Grey Lambert (for waiting three entire days for Mary-the-Mant was out of the question), and get him to read it. The other was to offer herself again as a pupil to Master Ben, and get herself taught writing "out of hand"—all in a minute—and surprise her lover (who was a wonderful scholar entirely) with her acquirements.

The next morning Anty arrived at Coolhull before Lambert had finished his prayers; for, on peeping through a large slit in the door, she saw the old man on his knees before a crucifix, at the farther end of the great hall, Bang sitting by his side, while the bright red light of morning streamed through one of the broken windows, and rested on their heads. Her visit was immediately noticed by the faithful dog, whose scent, or ear, soon discovered that she was outside. He walked steadily to the time-worn door, and laying his long nose on the ground, sniffed loudly three or four times, and moved his tail slowly, in token of recognition, as she entered. The young girl busied herself in lighting the fire, and settling the few rude articles of furniture according to her own taste, until Grey Lambert's orisons were finished. When he arose from his knees, she knelt and asked his blessing.

"Well, Anty, what's come to ye, my child, to be two good miles from your own home, and it not

six o'clock yet? Ye weren't heavy for sleep this morning, I'm sartin. Is there anything the matter at home, mavourneen?—for something strange must have brought ye. Come, don't look so shy; what is it ails the colleen?—Have ye lost yer tongue?—Fait, agra! it's bad indeed wid ye, if that's gone." Anty shook her head. "Well, I'll sit down here, and wait till ye choose to spake, and not spind any more o' my breath on ye; for, to tell God's truth, I've not much to spare; only I can't think what's over the girl." Lambert sat down; and after a considerable pause, during which Anty twisted and untwisted the corner of her apron with admirable perseverance, she drew the letter from its hiding-place, and, turning away her blushing face as she spoke, said, with considerable hesitation—

"Ye funned me about a letther last night. Sure I couldn't help it if the boy chose to write. It's no faut o' mine. I didn't put any comether in life upon him; and more betokens, I wouldn't have troubled ye to rade it for me if I could rade it myself. And sure, Grey Lambert, I didn't desave ye by no manner of manes; for I knew ye mistrusted we were almost keeping company afore Pat took the turn for going to sea."

"So, Anty, ye mane to be Grey Lambert's granddaughter. Whist now!—I'll rade the letther:—

"MY DEAR ANTY,—I do hope that these few lines will meet acceptance and true love from you, for ye haven't forgot the fippinny-bit; the half of

it, and the long curl, are next my bateing heart this minit, and sure it's in the core of it they should be, if I had any way to get them there; but it's all the same. I'm uneasy in my mind about two things—my poor ould ancient gran'fader, and your little innocent flirtish ways. Ah, Anty! sure there's all the boys on land that you used to taze the life o' me about. And ye think it no harm to laugh wid 'em now; but it wouldn't be the same if we were married.—Ye'd behave yourself thin, Anty. And that and my ould ancient gran'fader has made up my mind.—And the thoughts of it has prevented my spending.—And I'm coming home, plaze God, only don't tell the ould man, nor Bang, the baste, becace I mane every mother's sowl o' ye much joy.—And I've bought such a beautiful gown-piece for the wedding. Only to my thinking, Anty, nothing can make ye handsomer than ye are. And many charmers I have seen, but none like my Bannow girl. And Jim the boatswain has made a song upon ye, according to my telling, and every varse ends wid—

"Anty, the darlint of the land,
Is still her Paddy's pride."

Oh, it's a dale a finer song than "Colleen das Crutheen Amo," as you'll say whin ye hear it, which'll be very soon afther you, and my ould ancient gran'fader, gets the letthers. And there's another boy travelling home to Bannow, by the name of Thomas Clavery, a late soldier, but discharged—an honest, dacent craythur as ever drew breath, and doating alive upon the wife and the grawls. Be faithful to him that's faithful to you, "true as the needle to the poll."—God's blessing be



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about ye, prays, my dear Anty, your most affectionate lover (husband soon) till death,
" 'PATRICK LAMBERT.' "

Grey Lambert folded up the epistle, and returned it to its rightful owner. The old man did not jest upon its contents, but, rising from his seat, laid his hand on Anty's head, and, in a deep but solemn voice, said—

"So, colleen, the promise has passed betwixt ye, that in God's eye is as binding on ye as if the blessed Pope had joined yer hands in his holy temple at Rome. I knew ye had a kindness for each other, from many little things, more especially from the way Pat always mintioned ye in his letthers; but I didn't think ye were contracted, or else, Anty, who I love (and good right I have to love ye, as my own child), I would have talked more seriously to ye about the little flirting ways yer true love mintions. Anty, look up in the ould man's face, and tell him, did ye ever think—think solidly—what was required of woman in marriage?" There was that in Grey Lambert's manner which conquered levity, and the young girl looked up with the expression of countenance which replied "No." "Few craturs at yer age do," he continued: "and what I say to you, ye young wild flower, sweet and spotless as ye are, I will say to him; and more too, for ye are far faithfuller in yer naturs than us. Ah, Anty! it's asy enough to be true to the young heart's first

love whin all is full of hope; but in my early days I have seen affection that seemed as strong as life, and then, a breath, or a word, or a look maybe, has begun unkindness, and that has increased until, at last, bitter scorn, ay, and black hatred, grew where there had been nothing but love and smiles. And women have much to bear, Anty; for it's little men heed an unkind word, unjustly spoken maybe, and yet to be borne almost as if it was dear or darlint—which is the hardest word I hope ever to hear Patrick make use of to you. But, my girl, when ye knew of the promise, it wasn't quite right of ye to skit, and laugh, and dance, as if ye were free."

"I am sure, Grey Lambert," interrupted Anty, half crying, "ye've no rason to turn on me after that fashion, for I meant no harm, and nothing in life would ever make me jilty."

"Asy, agra, till I tell ye a little story to divart ye a bit; and it's all thrue, and I know ye'll find out my maning, for ye're 'cute enough." And Anty listened very attentively, pulling first one and then the other of Bang the baste's ears, which he bore patiently, not even increasing her perplexity by moving his head from off her lap.

"In the ancient times, when flowers, and trees, and fairies were on spaking terms, and all friendly together, one fine summer's day the sun shone out on a beautiful garden, where there war all sorts of plants that ye could mintion; and a lovely but giddy fairy went sporting about from one to

the other (although no one could see her, because of the sunlight) as gay as the morning lark. Then says the fairy to the rose, 'Rose, if the sun was clouded, and a storm came on, would ye shelter and love me still?' 'Do ye doubt me?' says the rose, and reddened up with anger. 'Lily,' says the fairy to another love, 'if the sun was clouded, and a storm came on, would ye shelter and love me still?' 'Oh, do you think I could change?' says the lily, and she grew still paler with sorrow. 'Tulip,' said the fairy, 'if the sun was clouded, and a storm came on, would ye shelter and love me still?' 'Upon my word!' said the tulip, making a very gentleman-like bow, 'ye're the very first lady that doubted my constancy.' So the fairy sported on, joyful to think of her kind and blooming friends. She revelled away for a time, and then she thought on the pale blue violet that was almost kivered with its broad green leaves; and, although it was an ould comrade, she might have forgotten it had it not been for the sweet scent that came up from the modest flower. 'Oh, Violet,' said the fairy, 'if the sun was clouded, and a storm came on, would ye shelter and love me still?' And the violet made answer, 'Ye have known me long, sweet fairy; and in the first spring-time, when there were few other flowers, ye used to shelter from the cold blast under my leaves. Now ye've almost forgotten me—but let it pass. Try my truth—if ever you should meet misfortune—I say nothing.' Well, the fairy skitted at that,

A CARD PARTY

From a Painting by

ERSKINE NICOL, R.S.A



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and clapped her silvery wings, and whisked, singing, off on a sunbeam; but she was hardly gone when a black cloud grew up out of the north, all in a minit, and the light was shrouded, and the rain fell in slashings, like hail, and away flies the fairy to her friend the rose. 'Now, Rose,' says she, 'the rain is come, so shelter and love me still.' 'I can hardly shelter my own buds,' says the rose, 'but the lily has a deep cup.' Well, the poor little fairy's wings were almost wet, but she got to the lily. 'Lily,' says she, 'the storm is come, so shelter and love me still.' 'I am sorry,' says the lily, 'but if I were to open my cup, the rain would bate in like fun, and my seed would be kilt entirely—the tulip has long leaves.' Well, the fairy was down-hearted enough, but she went to the tulip, who she always thought a sweet-spoken gentleman. He certainly did not look as bright as he had done in the sun, but she waved her little wand, and 'Tulip,' said she, 'the rain and the storm are come, and I am very weary, but you will shelter and love me still.' 'Begone!' says the tulip; 'be off!' says he. 'A pretty pickle I'd be in if I let every wandering scamper come about me.' Well, by this time she was very tired, and her wings hung dripping at her back—wet indeed; but there was no help for it, and leaning on her pretty silver wand, she limped off to the violet. And the darlint little flower, with its blue eye, that's as clear as a kitten's, saw her coming, and never a word she spoke, but opened her broad green leaves, and took the wild wander-

ing craythur to her bosom, and dried her wings, and breathed the sweetest perfumes over her, and sheltered her until the storm was clane gone. Then the humble violet spoke, and said, 'Fairy Queen, it is bad to flirt with many, for the love of one true heart is enough for earthly woman or fairy spirit; the ould and humble love is better than the gay compliments of a world of flowers, for *it* will last when the others pass.' And the fairy knew that it was true for the blue violet; and she contented herself ever after, and built her downy bower under the widespreading violet leaves that sheltered her from the rude winter's wind and the hot summer's sun; and to this very day the fairies love the violet beds."

Anty smiled, and suffered Bang's ears to escape when the story was finished. Grey Lambert smiled also, and as she was departing inquired if her parents knew of the contract. She frankly replied in the negative; and the old man accompanied the little gipsy to her father's cabin, where the news was joyfully received. Everybody liked Patrick; and, moreover, everybody suspected that in some sly corner the old man had wherewithal to make a plentiful wedding.

Nothing happened to prevent matters coming to a happy termination. Thomas Clavery and Patrick Lambert returned on the same day. The gown-piece was declared to be an "uncommon beauty," even by Mrs. Cassidy; and a time was fixed for the wedding:—but where do you suppose it was

celebrated? In no other place, I assure you, than in Grey Lambert's old castle.

"It's a fancy, I know," said he, "and a strange one, but I can't help it. The bride and bridegroom can trot off to their nate little cabin, that's all ready for them, and that I defy any one to say wants a single thing; and it will make me happy to know that once more laughter and music will visit the ancient castle of Coolhull."

Such a wedding was never seen in the country from that day to this. It was a most wonderful wedding! More than fifty long torches of bogwood were stuck up and down in the walls, and the ivy and wild plants formed a singular but not unpleasing contrast to the grey stones and flaring lights. One end of the dilapidated hall was reserved for dancing; and there, on a throne of turf, sat the immortal Kelly, a deep jug of whisky punch close to his footstool, and he "blowing away for the dear life" on his pipes. At the other end was a long table, formed of deal spars, covered with such cloths, plates, dishes, glasses, noggins, jugs, and sundries as the neighbouring farmhouses could lend—placed on stones and turfs, sufficiently elevated. What a supper!—rounds of beef, turkey, geese—such profusion! The "wedding of Ballyporeen" was nothing to it! And when the cake was fairly cut, Father Mike's perquisites were many, for Grey Lambert, whose reported wealth was no jest, laid down a golden guinea on the plate. He had bidden many of the neighbouring gentry to

the marriage; and, as the old man was much respected, and the arrangements very singular, there were few apologies. The great hall was, at an early hour, nearly filled with motley company: ladies and gentlemen, farmers and farmers' wives, "boys and girls" of all ranks, in their Sunday gear and with happy, joyous faces; some whispering so closely that Father Mike was led to believe a few more weddings would take place before Lent. Then the Babelish noises!—Kelly's pipes, merry laughter, loud tongues!

Grey Lambert danced merrily with the young ladies from the Parsonage, and "bate them off the flure" at the Irish jig. The bride looked provokingly pretty and mischievous; and the boatswain, who came from Waterford to the ceremony, sung not only—

"Anty, the darlint of the land,
Is still her Paddy's pride!"

but composed extemporaneous verses on the occasion, which were received with much applause.

Was that all? No: in a far corner sat Thomas and Mary Clavery!

John Williams, whose dislike to conversation disappeared in a very odd way, probably owing to his continued potations, annoyed Anty continually by calling her "Mrs. Lambert"; and the old man kept up the joke, somewhat unmercifully, by now and then reminding her of the past: "Sure I'll not come to see ye in yer unchristian-like place, if ye talk after that fashion to a young cratur like me!"

As the company departed, he conducted them with the air of a prince to the great gate; and Father Mike, after he had earnestly prayed that his full blessing might rest on them all, declared he had never been at so happy a wedding.

I am not prepared to state whether or not Anty learned writing, for she was able to prevail upon Patrick to "give up the sea," and content himself with the occasional management of a fishing boat; consequently, she was not likely, in the whole course of her life, to receive another letter. She remembered the fairy tale, and, to the credit of the sex be it spoken, left off "her flirting ways." Grey Lambert is still in possession of the old castle and extraordinary health; and John Williams may carry this tale to "mine old home," in his capacity as THE BANNOW POSTMAN.

“WE’LL SEE ABOUT IT”

“We’ll see about it!” From that simple sentence has arisen more evil to Ireland than any person ignorant of the strange union of impetuosity and procrastination my countrymen exhibit could well believe. They are sufficiently prompt and energetic when their feelings are concerned, but in matters of business they almost invariably prefer *seeing about* to *doing*.

I shall not find it difficult to illustrate this observation. From the many examples of its truth, in high and in low life, I select Philip Garraty.

Philip, and Philip’s wife, and Philip’s children, and all the house of Garraty, are employed from morning till night in *seeing about* everything, and, consequently, in *doing* nothing. There is Philip—a tall, handsome, good-humoured fellow, of about five-and-thirty, with broad, lazy-looking shoulders, and a smile perpetually lurking about his mouth or in his bright hazel eyes, the picture of indolence and kindly feeling. There he is leaning over what was once a five-barred gate, and leads to the hag-yard; his blue worsted stockings full of holes,

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which "the suggan," twisted half-way up the well-formed leg, fails to conceal; while his brogues (to use his own words), if they do let the water in, let it out again. With what unstudied elegance does he roll that knotted twine and then unroll it, varying his occupation by kicking the stones that once formed a wall into the stagnant pool, scarcely big enough for full-grown ducks to sail in.

But let us take a survey of the premises.

The dwelling-house is a long rambling abode, much larger than those that usually fall to the lot of small Irish farmers; for Philip rents a respectable farm, and ought to be "well-to-do in the world." The dwelling looks very comfortless, notwithstanding: part of the thatch is much decayed, and the rank weeds and damp moss nearly cover it; the door-posts are only united to the wall by a few scattered portions of clay and stone, and the door itself is hanging but by one hinge; the window-frames shake in the passing wind, and some of the compartments are stuffed with the crown of a hat or a "lock of straw"—very unsightly objects. At the opposite side of the swamp is the hag-yard gate, where a broken line of alternate palings and wall betokens that it had been formerly fenced in; the commodious barn is almost roofless, and the other sheds are pretty much in the same condition; the pig-sty is deserted by the grubbing lady and her grunting progeny, who are too fond of an occasional repast in the once-cultivated garden to remain in their proper abode;

the listless turkeys and contented half-fatted geese live at large and on the public; but the turkeys, with all their shyness and modesty, have the best of it, for they mount the ill-built stacks, and select the grain *à plaisir*.

"Give you good morrow, Mr. Philip. We have had showery weather lately."

"Och! all manner of joy to ye, my lady!—and sure ye'll walk in, and sit down. My woman will be proud to see ye. I'm sartin we'll have the rain soon agin, for it's everywhere, like bad luck; and my throat's sore with hurishing thim pigs out o' the garden—sorra a thing can I do all day for watching thim."

"Why do you not mend the door of the sty?"

"True for ye, ma'am dear. So I would if I had the nails; and I've been threat'ning to step down to Mickey Bow, the smith, to ask him to *see about it*."

"I hear you've had a fine crop of wheat, Philip."

"Thank God for all things! You may say that; we had, my lady, a fine crop. But I have always the height of ill-luck somehow; upon my sowkins (and that's the hardest oath I ever swear), the turkeys have had the most of it: but I mean to *see about* setting it up safe, to-morrow."

"But, Philip, I thought you had sold the wheat standing."

"It was all as one as sould; only it's a bad world, ma'am dear, and I've no luck. Says the steward to me, says he, 'I like to do things like a man of business; so, Mister Garraty, just draw up

a bit of an agreement that you deliver over the wheat-field to me, on sich a day, standing as it is, for sich a sum; and I'll sign it for ye, and thin there can be no mistake—only let me have it by this day week.' Well, to be sure, I came home full o' my good luck, and I tould the wife; and, on the strength of it, she must have a new gown. 'And sure,' says she, 'Miss Hennessy is just come from Dublin, wid a shopful of goods; and, on account that she's my brother's sister-in-law's first cousin, she'll let me have the first sight o' the things, and I can take my pick, and we'll have plinty of time to *see about* the 'greement to-morrow.' Well, I don't know how it was, but the next day we had no paper, nor ink, nor pens in the house: I meant to send the gossoon to Miss Hennessy's for all—but forgot the pens. So, when I was *seeing about* the 'greement, I bethought of the ould gander; and while I was pulling as beautiful a pen as ever ye laid yer two eyes upon out of his wing, he tattered my hand with his bill in such a manner that sorra a pen I could hould for three days. Well, at last I wrote it out like print, and takes it myself to the steward. 'Good evening to you, Mr. Garraty,' says he. 'Good evening kindly, sir,' says I. 'I've got the 'greement here, sir,' says I, pulling it out, as I thought—but I only cotcht the paper it was wrapt in, to keep it from the dirt of the tobacco, that was loose in my pocket for want of a box; so I turned out what little bits o' things I had in it, and there was a grate hole, that ye might drive all the parish

rats through, at the bottom, which the wife promised to *see about* mending as good as six months before. Well, I saw the sneer on his ugly mouth (for he's an Englishman), and I turned it off with a laugh, and said air holes were comfortable in hot weather, and sich-like jokes, and that I'd go home and make another 'greement. 'Greement! for what?' says he, laying down his grate outlandish pipe. 'Whew! maybe ye don't know,' says I. 'Not I,' says he. 'The wheat-field,' says I. 'Why,' says he, 'didn't I tell you then, that you must bring the 'greement to me by that day week?—and that was' (by the same token pulling a red memorandum book out of his pocket), 'let me see—exactly this day three weeks. Do you think, Mr. Garraty,' he goes on, 'that I was going to wait upon you? I don't lose my papers in the Irish fashion.' Well, that last set me up—and I had the ill-luck to knock him down; and, the coward, what does he do but takes the law o' me—and I was cast, and lost the sale of the wheat, and was ordered to pay ever so much money. Well, I didn't care to pay it then, but gave an engagement; and I meant to *see about it*—but forgot; and, all in a jiffy, came a thing they call an execution; and to stop the cant,¹ I was forced to borrow money from the tame negur, the exciseman—and it's a terrible case to be paying *interest* for it *still*."

"But, Philip, you might give up or dispose of part of your farm. I know you could get a good sum of money for that rich meadow by the river."

¹ Cant—sale.

"True for ye, ma'am dear, and I've been *seeing about it* for a long time, but somehow *I have no luck*. Just as ye came up, I was thinking to myself that the gale-day is passed, and all one as before. Yarra a pin's worth have I for the rint; and the landlord wants it as bad as I do, though it's a shame to say that of a gintleman—for, jist as he was *seeing about* some old custodium, or something of the sort, that had been hanging over the estate ever since he came to it, the sheriff's officers put *executioners* in the house; and I am sartin he'll be racking me for the money—indeed, the ould huntsman tould me as much. But I must *see about it*—not indeed that it's much good, for I've no luck."

"Let me beg of you, Philip, not to take such an idea into your head. Do not lose a moment; you will be utterly ruined if you do. Why not apply to your father-in-law?—he is able to assist you; for at present you only suffer from temporary embarrassment."

"True for ye, my lady; and, by the blessing of God, I'll *see about it*."

"Then go directly, Philip."

"Directly! I can't, ma'am dear, on account of the pigs; and sorra a one I have but myself to keep them out of the cabbages, for I let the woman and the grawls go to the pattern at Killaun. It's little pleasure they see, the craturs!"

"But your wife did not hear the huntsman's story?"

"Och! ay, did she. But unless she could give

me a sheaf o' bank-notes, where would be the good of her staying? But I'll *see about it*."

"Immediately, then, Philip. Think of the ruin that may come—nay, that must come—if you neglect this matter. Your wife, too—your family reduced from comfort to starvation—your home desolate——"

"Asy, my lady!—don't be after breaking my heart intirely. Thank God, I have seven as fine flahulagh children as ever peeled pratee, and all under twelve years ould; and sure I'd lay down my life tin times over for every one o' them: and to-morrow for sartin—no—to-morrow—the hurling; I can't to-morrow; but the day after, if I'm a living man, *I'll see about it*."

Poor Philip! his kindly feelings were valueless, because of his unfortunate habit. Would that this were the only example I could produce of the ill effects of that dangerous little sentence, "*I'll see about it!*" Oh that the sons and daughters of the fairest island that ever heaved its green bosom above the surface of the ocean would arise and *be doing* what is to be done, and never again rest contented with "SEEING ABOUT IT"!

BEGGARS

It is impossible for those who have been brought up amid the pleasant scenes and teeming luxuries of England to comprehend the length and breadth and depth of Irish suffering. They may read of it in books—they may scrutinise it in pictures—but how completely do they fail to obtain even a remote idea of what it really is. The eye must see it—the ear must hear it—to conceive of its extent or to appreciate its influence; and deeply dead to every feeling of humanity must be the heart from which it does not extort sympathy.

"How happy," said a young Irishman to me the other morning,—“how very happy you must be—you have no beggars in England!”

I endeavoured to convince him that though there were but few whom *he would call beggars*, there was a great deal of poverty in the country. He laughed at the notion of considering people *poor* who had a roof over their heads and bread to eat, and that, too, without working for it; and bade me call to mind the thousands and tens of thousands without food, clothes, or dwellings that are scattered over considerably more than half of my unfortunate

country. He was right; and yet within the last two months I journeyed from Bannow to the county town of Wexford—a distance of more than sixteen miles—without encountering a single beggar, or one who appeared to need alms. Our way lay through the highly cultivated baronies of Forth and Bargy. I cannot give a favourable account of the state of the road, for it was jolting and ill-made as usual, winding to the summit of the mountain of Forth, but commanding in the distance one of the most extensive—I may say *cultivated*—sea-views I had ever the good fortune to behold; while the foreground was studded with gentlemen's seats, white and cheerful cottages, and a number of castles and fortresses of the olden time, scowling upon the earth in all the variety of tower, turret, and bastion. I never saw a district so full of the relics of antiquity; they were almost crowded in the landscape, yet they appeared as if actually placed where they were necessary to the pictorial effect of the whole. I said the sea-view was *cultivated*; the expression needs some explanation. It had signs of life on its vast expanse—it was not an immensity of water floating in majesty until joined by the horizon: it was broken near the shore by the peninsula of Ballytigue, by the projection of Cape Forlorn, by the Saltee Islands, and, far and away, by the Tower of Hook, frowning on its pedestal upon the waves that wrestled in the bay, and clambered the rock in gigantic merriment! Then there was the

long line of smoke streaking the sky, and marking the steamer's course. There went the widespread canvas of the well-stored merchantman, proud of its cargo, and yielding but little homage to the waves or winds; the light skiff danced amidst the spray, while its pennon floated and gleamed in the distance, more like the tiny sail of the nautilus than aught that could carry half a dozen living creatures, either for profit or pleasure, upon the ocean. The signs of existence and traffic floated upon the waters—you saw the traces of life, but you heard no sound. We were completely above all human habitations: we looked down upon the peopled earth and the majestic sea. Sometimes an ambitious raven would whirl cawing above our heads; or a peal of cheerful laughter from the harvest-field climb the rocks, and strike upon our ears as sweetly as a "marriage-bell"—all else was silent—profoundly still—the glowing sun above our heads, the granite fortress of the mountain's top mingling with the clouds, and this extensive and beautiful panorama at our feet. It was a scene never to be forgotten—so varied, so sublime, but, above all, so tranquil! The horses crept slowly on—so slowly that, as the coachman walked by their side up the hill, we could inquire the names of the different castles and dwellings within view.

"How very free this road is from beggars—we have not encountered *one* since we left Bannow!"

"Why, then, it's proud myself is to hear your

honour say that same," responded Andrew, "for the English quality are ever faulting the beggars—the craythers, though, God help us! none of us know whose turn it may be next. *Sure if I was sthruck,*¹ what would keep me from it? God break hard fortune! I have no one belonging to me, to talk about, and the end would be, I should take to the road!"

"Why do you not save money, Andrew? Many of the English servants save."

"It's asy say Save! What could a boy like me save? 'Tis true my mistress riz me to ten pounds; but then she's so *cruel clean* that the half of it goes for washing—white gloves, and white stockings, and white cravats! Besides, where's the good of saving? Denying oneself everything, and then die maybe afore the time comes to spend."

Irish all over, thought I. The people here are either constantly reasoning, like madmen, right from wrong principles; or, like fools, wrong from right ones. In either case they are in error, and are likely to remain so until a complete change is effected in their managng and management.

We soon entered the town of Wexford, unfortunately too well known in the annals of Irish rebellion and Irish violence—violence exercised by the party, under whatever name it may be described, that chanced for the time to be in the ascendant. It is an ugly, straggling, inconvenient, dirty town, with noble quays, a new and very pretty bridge, a

¹ Fell ill; "struck of a suddent," fell ill suddenly.

GIPSIES ON THE ROAD

From a Painting by

ERSKINE NICOL, R.S.A.



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some bank, a curious court-house (the very best, I have heard, in Ireland), and inhabited by the most hospitable of hospitable people. I suppose what is called *society* is much upon a par with other country towns—a little love, a moderate degree of friendship, an immoderate degree of envy, a proportion of flirting, a circulating library which has no books to circulate, a reading club, as the boy said, there was “no nothing,” a curate preacher, and a smart military detachment. I wrote my description from memory; for during my visit everything to me was “made pleasant”—everything except the beggars!

“There’s enough of ’em here, any way,” said the brewer, turning round, as he pointed to a multitude who were waiting for us at the door of the great

Good God! it was a pitiable sight—the host of wretched, starving creatures who thrust themselves against the carriage door so as completely to prevent its being opened. The servant came round to the other side, which was less blockaded, and placing his face close to the glass, whispered—

“If yez will be plased to throw a few halfpence among them, it’ll scatter them, my lady, and then we can get out.”

A few halfpence! To look upon the moving mass of starvation and misery, one would have imagined that the wealth of Cræsus would go but a short way to alleviate their distress. One of the couple—a tall, lithesome fellow, with rolling black

eyes and a pitiable vacancy of look—grasped the carriage-lamp, or rather the part where the lamp should have been, and swung himself backwards and forwards, singing out, "A penny for Johnny, a penny for Johnny. Long life to the King and O'Connell—O'Connell and the King! A penny for Johnny, *and another for Jack*. Poor Jack! poor Johnny! poor Johnny! poor Jack!" "Don't mind him, lady dear," shouted a woman, the upper part of whose form was enveloped in a coarse blue cloth cloak, while from over either shoulder lolled forth the head and arms of a squalid, half-starved child. "Sure, he's a fool, and the fools never want—every one gives to the fools, to set off their own sense. Look at me, and God bless your sight!—look at me, with nothing but a blind man—(come here, Dan'el; lead him forward, Lanty)—nothing but a blind man for a father over my ten children." "But see here, your honour, look at me, with as good as eleven, and no father at all over them!" interrupted another, who, not being encumbered with two living creatures on her back, was, I suppose, better able to fight her way and maintain her station at the carriage door. "Stand back, Mary Shiels, ma'am!" exclaimed a third; "what a brag you make about *your* children—and every one of them far away, barring those ye borrow for a set-off. Eleven, indeed!—it's asy for the likes o' you to have double eleven, when you never cares what comes o' them!" This address, delivered to Mrs. Mary Shiels, was given in a tone and with an air of what I should imagine Billings-

gate eloquence : the head thrown back, the arms akimbo, the voice wound to a high pitch, and the eye discoursing as rapidly and decidedly as the tongue ; but as the second part of her speech was addressed to ourselves, the attitude, air, manner, and voice changed miraculously, and was delivered in a drawling brogue : " God mark ye to grace, and bestow a trifle upon the poor widdy, the *raal* widdy. Give her a *teaster*, or a little sixpence, just to keep her from starving ! Sure, it's yerselves have the kind heart ! See here the hardship God sent upon me," and she lifted a child distorted in all its limbs, and in the lowest state of idiotcy, close up to the window. The miserable creature clapped its twisted hands together, and as the thick matted hair fell over its small dull eyes, and it scratched at the glass like some wild animal seeking to disinter its prey, I thought I had never seen so painful or disgusting a spectacle. Those unfortunate idiots, which in England are confined in proper asylums, in Ireland are reared to excite compassion from the traveller ; and I think that at least every tenth family is cursed with one of those helpless creatures. You meet them by the wayside, in the cottages, basking in the sunshine, wallowing with the pigs upon the dunghills, and always soliciting alms, which is hardly ever denied them. Many of those witless beings, as they grow up, attain a degree of cunning which, with a species of animal instinct, they manage to turn to good account. And what are called *Naturals*, in the expressive idiom of the

country, form a class perfectly unknown in any other land. But this topic I have treated elsewhere. To return to the beggars. Let it not be imagined that the few I have specified were the only ones who demanded gifts: there were blind, and lame, and drunk, and sober—but all civil, and all tolerably good-tempered—exercising their eloquence or their wit, as it might chance, upon their auditory, and intent upon extorting money from our compassion. My feelings were at the time too strongly excited to be amused, though one, a *bocher*, or lame man, succeeded in clearing a space that he might give my honour a dance, while “Piping Brady,” an old, blind, white-headed man, “set up the pipes” to the exhilarating tune of “St. Patrick’s Day,” which acted like magic upon the group. “Poor Johnny, poor Jack,” who had continued whirling round and round, keeping up his petition and singing it in every variety of tone, fixed, like Ixion, upon the wheel; and as the decrepit creature jumped to the music with extraordinary rapidity, and flourished his crutch in the air, the whole assembly seemed spell-moved, the old men and old women beating time with their feet and sticks, and snapping their fingers at the conclusion of every bar; and the children, forgetful of their misery, dancing in right-down earnest, their pale cheeks flushing with exercise, and their rags quivering about them.

Nearer to the door of the inn stood a girl—I could hardly call her a woman—who had asked for charity with the silent eloquence of her eyes, but

had neither pressed forward nor been excited by the music. The hood of her long blue cloak was thrown over her head, and shadowed the upper part of her beautiful face; her eyes were mild and blue—they might have been bright once, but their lustre was dimmed by weeping; and her fair long hair hung uncombed, untrained down either side of her face. There was something so classic in her form that it called to mind those Grecian models where the drapery clings so closely that you imagine it adheres to the form—the falling shoulders, the outline of the graceful back were distinctly marked, and she had gathered the folds up in front to cover a sleeping infant, which she clasped to her bosom, so that the cloak, thus confined, fell in many and thick folds nearly to her ankles, which, of course, were divested of any covering. The bocher's dance was finished, and well pleased were the exhibitors to receive a silver sixpence between them—three-pence for the piper, threepence for the dancer. "Poor Jack, poor Johnny," recommenced his tune and whirl, and the beggars invented fresh miseries.

"Why, then, 'twas a lucky dream I had last night brought me to the town to-day!" exclaimed one of the score who followed us under the very porch, "and maybe ye'd listen to it?—I dreamed I was down in the very bottom of a paytee pit, and three magpies came flying over my head, and one, God save us! was like the gauger that broke my husband by his lies, and the other was the very moral of that handsome gentleman; and sure it's

myself sees the likeness in your sweet self, lady, to t'other mag!"

"A hole in yer ballad!" exclaimed one voice.—

"A hole in yer manners!" shouted another.—

"Liken a fair-faced lady to a magpie, Judy!" vociferated a third.

"And why not?" replied the impenetrable Judy, "why not? Isn't a magpie a knowin' bird, and a handsome bird, and a fine bird?"

"Yet ye said he was like the gauger just now," answered a little grey-eyed, cunning-looking man.

"People may be like each other, and yet not the same at all at all; ye're like yer father, Tim, and yet he was six feet high. He was an honest man, Tim.—Neighbours dear," she continued, appealing to the crowd, "do any of ye see any likeness betwixt Tim an' his father in that way?" There was a loud laugh, and Tim shrunk behind, while Judy went on—

"Well, the last magpie said to me, says she, 'Never heed the gauger,' (and sure I saw in a minute it wasn't a magpie at all, but yer darlint self was in it), 'for I'll give ye an English half-crown to buy a blanket and linsey woolsey to make ye a petticoat'—what, God-break hard fortune! I've not had these five years."

"Oh, a penny, any way, lady dear, to keep the cold from my heart!" roared another.

"There's twopence for you," exclaimed my companion, "if you will promise not to drink it."

"Success!" exclaimed the fellow, catching the half-pence gaily in his hand, "I'll do that same this

minute," and off he went to the whisky shop, where, unfortunately, three parts of the Irish spend what little they can obtain.

We distributed perhaps more than we ought amongst the crowd, for which our worthy landlady reproved us while directing her maid, a slipslop, capless girl to dust everything in the house barring the pictures, which must not be touched, which she never would have touched since Ally Kelly rubbed out his reverence's nose with her scrubbing-brush and cleanliness.

I have been often much astonished at the—*not* apathy, for that is the last fault the Irish can be accused of—indifference manifested, particularly by the middle class of society, to the horrid misery of the poor. You cannot walk out in a country town without meeting at every turn a population of poverty. I have attempted to count the beggars—I found it impossible; the barefooted creatures were beyond number—and yet the shopkeepers and tradespeople, nay, the greater part of the gentry, do not appear pained or distressed by the recurrence of such scenes as freeze a stranger's blood, and make him hasten to quit a country where the degrading wretchedness of his fellow-creatures seems to upbraid him for the indulgence of his smallest luxury.

"Lord, ma'am," said the landlady, "we have more beggars in our county than in almost any other, and it is useless to attempt to suppress them or lessen their numbers; they spring up like mush-

rooms. The man sets off to make English hay and gather in the English harvest, and then the woman shuts the door of her cabin, rolls her infant in her blanket, secures the blanket on her back by turning the tail of her gown over it: the eldest girl carries the kettle, the eldest boy the begging bag, the middle ones have nothing to carry, and a couple of younger children hang by the mother's cloak; and so they travel from place to place, and there's none of the farmers will refuse them a *lock* of straw to sleep on, a shed to sleep under, a mouthful of potatoes, or a dole of meal. They are much happier than they look, and by the time the winter closes in, why, the husband comes home, and then they live maybe comfortable enough till the next spring, when the mother, with the addition most likely of another child to roll in the blanket, again shuts the door, and again wanders through the country, while the husband repeats his visit to England, where he is well fed and well paid."

"How wretched!" I exclaimed.

"I dare say it seems so to you, ma'am," she replied, "but they are used to it—they do not feel it a disgrace; and many a fine man and woman is reared that way, after all."

"To what purpose?" I almost unconsciously inquired.

"Purpose," she repeated,—as the Irish generally do when they hear a word whose import they do not clearly comprehend,—“why, as to purpose, the boys, in the time of the war, used to make fine

soldiers. I don't exactly see what all the *little garsoons* who are growing up now are to do—go to America, I suppose, or beg, or——”

“Starve!” I added.

“Ay, indeed!” she replied, but without any emotion, “so they do starve by dozens and dozens up the country; and my husband says it's a sin to send so many pigs and things to England, and the poor craythurs here without food.”

“And yet your provisions are so cheap—I saw fine chickens to-day for eightpence a couple.”

“Is it eightpence?” exclaimed the landlady in amazement. “Ah, lady dear, they knew you were a stranger—catch them asking me eightpence! I could get the finest chicks in the market for sixpence-halfpenny a couple: eightpence indeed! Oysters are up to tenpence a hundred, and potatoes to twopence a stone—and more shame, now that the country is poorer than ever; but what signifies the price, when the poor have not it to give?”

“But why do they not work?”

“Who stays in the country, except one here and there, to give them work? Ah! it's easy for the fine English folk to make laws for us,” she added, her broad, good-humoured face assuming a more animated expression; “it's easy for them to make laws—they who have never been with us, and know nothing of us, except from what's *on* the papers, which are done up by this party or that party, without any regard to truth, only all for party. Sure myself and my husband were burnt to ashes

in the *Independent* (the newspaper)—and all, they said, through a mistake—and we here quiet and happy—more than many wished. But there's Mrs. Lanagan, I ask yer pa: ¹, but may I just inquire how she is? She came to me for a bad pain she had on her chest, and I gave her a blister to put on it." I requested Mrs. Lanagan might walk in, and in she came, a delicate-looking woman, with a harsh, deep cough.

"Well, Mrs. Lanagan," commenced the hostess, "*how* are you to-day?"

"Oh, then, thank you kindly for asking; *sorra a boillah* on me at all at all.¹ I was pure and hearty yesterday, but I'm entirely overcome to-day. I've been out among the Christians, looking for a trifle; but the regular ones gets the better of me; and the farmers' wives have little pity for us, as long as we're able to keep the roof over our head."

"But your chest, Mrs. Lanagan—did you put the blister on your chest as you promised, and did it rise?" inquired the landlady.

The poor woman looked up, with an expression of simplicity I shall never forget, while she replied—

"Why, thin, mistress dear, the niver a *chest* had I to put it on, but I have a little bit of a *box*, and I put it upon that, but *sorra a rise* it rose; and if ye don't believe me, come and see, for it's stickin' there still!"

This affected my gravity, or rather destroyed it;

¹ I cannot translate this literally, but it means, I am not at all better.

but the landlady commenced a regular lecture upon the stupidity of ignorance, which she intended me to understand as the evidence of her superiority. She assured Mrs. Lanagan that she was ashamed of her, and that it was such as she who brought shame and disgrace upon her country.

"Why, thin," replied the woman, "as to disgrace, mistress, honey, it is not our fault if we're not taught better, for no one can call us stupid, barrin' they're *stupid themselves*."

It will scarcely be believed, yet it is true, that I was tempted once more to ascend a "jaunting car": it is a weakness to be overcome by persuasion, a desperate weakness, and yet I could not help it. The car was new, handsome, and the property of a kind friend: there were many things I must see—Johnstown Castle and the lower portion of the Barony of Forth, celebrated for fresh eggs, *sweet* butter, and pretty girls. I esteem fresh eggs as a rarity, and I dearly love pretty girls. I cannot understand how a person can ever look without a smile into a pretty face; it is a sentiment, a point of feeling with me. And certainly the girls of the Barony of Forth—or, as they call it, Barny Fort—are very, *very* pretty, well worth going even ten miles, but *not* on a jaunting car, to look at: their eyes are so bright and black, their hair superb, and their manners so shy, so winning, so—I hardly know how to define it, except from their being so un-English, so unstarched. Nor do I know a prettier sight than three or four dozen of

those nice, clean, smiling, blushing girls drawn up at either side of a dirty, hilly, ugly street in ugly Wexford on market-day. Their clean willow-baskets hanging from their well-turned arms, their green or crimson silk neckerchiefs carefully pinned and the ends in front drawn beneath their neat chequered aprons, while at every step you take you are saluted with: "New-laid eggs, my lady, three a penny."—"Sweet fresh butter."—"Beautiful lily-white chickens, my own rearing."—"I'm sellin' these bran-new turkey eggs for a song, for I'm distressed for the money to make up the price of the cotton to weave in with my own yarn."

"I'll sing you five songs for them, Patty!" exclaimed a wag.

"Oh, let us alone, Peter, and don't make us forfit our manners by breaking your head before the quality; it's a bad market we'd be bringing our eggs to if we let you have them!"

I have seen many more superb market-places, but I never saw so many pretty girls as in the ugly town of Wexford.

Having agreed once more to perform *dos-a-dos* upon the aforementioned car, I made up my mind to suffer more than ever from the beggars; but I found they always assembled in proportion to what they considered the greatness of the equipage. Thus a car would attract less attention amongst these knight-errants of poverty than a carriage; and as two carriages were standing at the door of the principal inn, we passed comparatively free. The

Irish have an idea that upon those *dos-a-dos* you see the country better than from any other machine—heaven help them! they have strange ideas on many subjects. We passed through the town with not more than a score of beggars dangling after us and repeating their petitions in every variety of tone—thrusting their idiot and half-starved children almost into our arms, making us exceedingly angry at one minute by their importunity and noise, and the next amusing us so much by their wit and good temper that we could bestow upon them half, nay all, our money with goodwill; at one time provoked by their dirt and indolence, and again sympathising most sincerely with their poverty and distress. You are perpetually excited by either displeasure, pain, or amusement, and you can hardly tell which moderates.

After much jolting and delay, we passed the suburbs, and there, beneath the trunk of a blasted tree, her entire figure shrouded in her cloak, sat the girl whose appearance had attracted my notice amongst the crowd on a former occasion. I could not see her face, even her hair was concealed by the hood which fell unto her knees; but I felt assured I could not be mistaken—the rounded shoulder, the graceful sweep of the back, all convinced me I was right.

I ordered the servant to stop. I called to her—there was no reply. I sprang off the car; I drew back the hood of her cloak—still she moved not. Her hair had fallen like a shroud over her features,

and upon the baby which was pressed to her bosom. I threw back her hair, and laid my hand upon her forehead; it was clammy and cold as with the damps of death! I attempted to move her head back, and, sinking on my knees, looked into her face. It was as the face of a corpse before the features have been decently composed by the hand of the living: the purple lips were parted, the teeth clenched, the eye fixed, the hollow cheek white as marble. I saw that the infant moved, and I tried to unclasp her arms from around it—I even succeeded in pulling the little creature in some degree from her embrace. But the mother's love was stronger than death: rigid, lifeless as she appeared, she felt what I was doing; her arms tightened round her baby, and her lips moved as if in speech. The child cried, and clung to the breast from which it could draw no sustenance; and the miserable parent grasped it with an earnestness which almost made me tremble lest she should crush out its little life. The cloak had fallen from her; but I quickly drew it over her shoulders, for I perceived that she was entirely destitute of any other covering except some tattered flannel that had been wound round her waist. The case was sufficiently plain—mother and child were dying of starvation.

In a few minutes we succeeded in conveying them to the nearest cottage—a perfectly Irish dwelling, a little away from the road; and it was really heart-cheering to witness the eagerness which the inhabitants evinced to restore the poor creature

to existence. Big and little, old and young hastened to do their best. It is not at any time difficult to draw the Irish from their employment, but now that they had an object worthy of their energy, they exerted it heart and soul. One wanted to force raw whisky down the throats of mother and child; but the more rational poured the water off some boiling potatoes to prepare a warm bath. While the old deaf mother of the family mixed some spirits in milk, and gave it spoonful by spoonful to the young woman, a pretty girl (one of my market beauties, who, like myself, was accidentally passing), to whom the mother had resigned it, fed the little infant with new milk.

"It's poor Milly Kane—God-break hard fortune!" said one, who was shaking a quantity of barley-straw in the "warm corner" for her visitors to lie upon. "It's poor Milly Kane, sure enough! And had you seen her this time two years, madam, when she was the lily, the pride of the whole parish, it's little you'd fancy you see her there now!"

"Has she known better days?" I inquired, when about to leave the cottage.

"Better," repeated the old crone, shaking her head, "ay, sure; you see how finely she's come to. And indeed I'll mind what you say, and only give her a sup or a bit now and agin. It was a mercy you seen her when you did, for half an hour more would have finished them both."

"But you say that she has received food and

clothing from many well-disposed individuals—how is it, then, that she is so dreadfully reduced ? ”

“ Did I say so ? Why, then, more shame for me ; maybe it's into trouble I'd be getting her,” replied the woman hastily ; and I could draw forth no further information. There are circumstances and people which occupy so much of one's attention in this world that it is impossible to banish them from the mind ; and yet, to all outward seeming, they are in no way different from twenty other things or persons we encounter. When we returned from our ride, we were surrounded by all the beggars, who, now that the carriages were gone, had no other object to attract their attention ; yet there was one figure my imagination conjured up, which remained before me far more palpably than those who, with strength of voice and energy of action, called aloud for charity.

As the evening drew in, I borrowed a rough rug cloak, and, taking a few trifles with me that I thought would be useful to poor Milly Kane, I was soon at the door of the cottage in which I had been so hospitably received. The door was fastened, carefully fastened on the inside ; it had neither lock nor bolt, but a chest and table had been placed against it—and they were not removed until my voice had been remembered.

“ Do you shut up so early ? ”

“ Sure, then, we wouldn't have shut up at all had we known the good luck that was coming to us, my lady,” replied the woman, curtsying.

BUYING CHINA

From a Painting by
ERSKINE NICOL, R.S.A.



"Well, how is your patient? Better, I hope? Where is she?"

"She's better, my lady, and she's gone."

"Gone!" I repeated in astonishment, perceiving that the woman had spoken truly in one sense, at all events; for she had quitted the "warm corner."

"Gone! Where?"

"Oh, myself knows nothing at all about Milly Kane and her goings; only one came for her."

"One! Who?"

"Oh, some boy or another. Maybe it was her father, only he's dead, poor man."

I sat down, believing from my heart that there was some mystery, some concealment about Milly's disappearance, which I could not discover, and which, of course, I desired to fathom.

"Where is your husband?"

"The never a know I know where he is, or if he is at all. He left me as good as five years now, to go to Newfoundland; and, God help me! I never heard—to say heard—of him since; and I live by the help of good neighbours and good Christians—like many more."

I looked round the room and perceived that a quantity of what are called "wattles" were placed so as to conceal a door at the upper end of it; indeed, I do not think I should have perceived it had I not fancied that I saw a gleam as if of candlelight stream through a chink. The woman perceived it also, and with the ready wit of her sex and country anticipated my question.

"It's a bit of a shed we put up for the pigs, because the quality lately have been very angry with us for letting the craythurs have the run of the house; and my Padeen's in there making 'em eat. They're but delicate lately, owing to the measles."

"Indeed!" I replied; "then that is a healthy one, I suppose, that I see lying under the shadow of the wall?"

The old woman's keen eye glittered upon me for a moment, with an expression I did not at all like; but she quickly answered—

"Troth no, that's a sick one intirely; that's not fit to be put out. Bonneen gra," she continued, addressing the animal, "Bonneen gra, how's every bit o' ye? Bonneen was a heart's joy, a cushla!" The brute grunted, but moved not.

"I am so sorry poor Milly is gone," I said, producing what I had brought for her from a little basket, which a gentleman of my acquaintance very disrespectfully calls "a smuggler."

"Maybe I'd see her to-morrow; or if you'd lave the things with me, I'd send the childer to hunt her out in the morning, madam."

"How can you expect me to leave them with a person I know so little of?"

The woman became heated in a moment; one would have thought her temper had hardly time to ignite when it blazed out with all the energy of her country.

"And ye wouldn't trust me with them bits o'

raggs for fear I'd keep 'em!" she exclaimed. "Me! Oh, murder, how we are belied to the furriners entirely! or a lady like you would never think sich a thing. Keep from Milly Kane what was given to her! I, who many a day have taken the whole bit out of my own and the half bit out of my children's mouths to keep her from starvin'! And if I chose to say what I know, I could fill this hand with goold, if t'other would consint to crush her heart. I'm standin' on my own flure, lady, or I'd tell ye my mind more plainly. *All Wexford knows I'm poor, but the Almighty knows I'm honest!*"

At this instant the wail of a child came from what I had been told was the pig-shed, at first loud and shrill, then low and suffocated, with a murmur of words in different voices. At last I heard a weak female voice exclaim, "Let it cry out, Michael. Don't smother my babby; let it breathe," and then the infant's voice rose higher than at first. Suddenly the door I had noticed was opened—the wattles fell to the ground—and a tall man issued from the chamber with a bold, firm step.

"Oh, Michaelawn! Michaelawn! you're ruined entirely now. Couldn't ye keep back!" exclaimed the woman.

"I'm ashamed that you kept me back so long," he replied; "and the lady here—sure, only for her, where would Milly and my child be now? Stretched cold corpses upon that table, instead

of lying in that bed." I had never seen a more ruffianly nor yet a finer-looking fellow: his head was so well set, his brow so bold, his bearing so intrepid that, either from fear or respect, or a mingling of both, I arose from my seat. He interpreted the action to a desire to see his wife, and preceded me to the room.

The pale mother attempted to support herself on her elbow, but could not. I drew near to her. She grasped my hand, and kissed it fervently. I laid my small offerings of food and clothing on the bed; and the little infant, whose cry had ceased, looked with its large hungry eyes into my face. I could not forbear turning round to the old story-teller, and saying, "What a prettily furnished sty!"

She appeared angry and sulky; but the young man spoke for her.

"If I was caught this night in Wexford, I'd be hung as high as the steeple in a month."

"Michael!" said Milly, in a tone of trembling terror.

"Whisth, honey, whisth. I'll tell the truth, for I mind hearing onct that a lie is the devil's bait to catch fresh sins; and I've enough ould ones left. Well, that fear has been over me for as good as three weeks; and God in heaven knows we had a purty good spell of starvation afore that. When I begged, I was tould to work; but no one would employ me, because——"

"Michael!" interrupted my poor patient.

"There, darlint, I'll not tell—lay easy, for God's sake!—Well, there was a ship that agreed to lay off Cape Forlorn, to take me an' five others beyant seas, if we'd do the work of the ship for nothing, and these three weeks we've been waitin' for it; and *she* used to come in and beg, and gather what she could in the town all day, and in the night steal down to us, where I was hidden, with it. But I little thought how my jewel had reduced herself to keep the bit and the sup to me while I stayed on this cursed ground; and last night we got word how the ship would be there to-morrow at day-break, and when she was laving me, as I thought for good, till I could send for her out, as I passed my arm over the cloak round her, I thought she felt thin o' clothes, and I tould her so; but she turned it off, *as she always turned the throuble away from me*. 'I'm not as bare as ye think,' says she, 'only the weather's warm, and I haven't strength to carry much clothes.' And now for me to see that the wales in her bleedin' feet are deep enough to bury my finger in—but oh! the wales in my heart are deeper, to think I brought her to this!" The tears and sobs of a strong man are terrible to look upon and hear, and he covered his face with his hands, to hide his emotion.

"Michael! Michael!" repeated Milly, "trust in God! Don't ye see the friend to the fore that was sent me from a far country? Oh! but it's worse to me than the sore feet to see ye take on so!"

"And if ye plase, my lad, I'd never ha' said the

lie about the pigs, only ye bothered me with sharp questions and looks, and Mick wouldn't lave Milly till the last, for I thought she was going, and sent for him," said the crone, with a still lower curtesy than she had greeted me with at first. "And I hope yer honour won't let on that he's been here?"

"*The first gun!*" exclaimed a hoarse voice through a broken window at the head of the miserable bed.

"Then I must go: the ship's in sight; that's our word," returned Michael. The poor sufferer fainted in the last, perhaps the very last, embrace of her husband. "I'll lave her so: if I was to stay, I couldn't now save her from starvation!" said the wretched man: "but, lady, pity her still. If I'd took the advice of that poor broken-hearted girl, I shouldn't now——"

"Mammy! mammy!" shouted a barefooted urchin, rushing into the cabin, and who had doubtless been set on the watch; "there's three Peelers coming down the street, and one has gone round Martin Clay's park!"

Michael glared fiercely round the room, and seized a pitchfork that had fallen with the wattles.

"Fool!" said the old ready-witted story-teller, "what's the good of that? Crawl under the bed, and we'll make it out." He did as he was desired. I never experienced till that moment the desperate anxiety which it is possible to feel to defeat the ends of justice. The man might have been a murderer—it was all the same to me.

"Sit down," said the crone to the scout, "and be gettin' yer lesson." The brat, in the twinkling of an eye, had obeyed her orders, and, with his finger resting on the greasy page, was seated on a boss in the chimney-corner. I was about to administer some restoratives to poor Milly, but the more judicious woman whispered—

"For God's sake let her alone; if she comes to, and *they* here, she'll begin screechin' for her husband."

The policemen entered. They were both civil, though they turned over the wattles, and one of them even poked his staff beneath the bed.

"Sit down on the bed, a lannan," whispered the director to me; "they won't disturb a lady, though they'd think little about 'tossicating the poor."

After muttering something to each other, they went out; remaining, however, near the door.

"They're on the watch, devil's curse to them!" exclaimed the woman. "Padeen," she added, calling so loudly to the child that they could not avoid hearing her, "Padeen, lay by yer lesson, good boy, and go down for a farthin' light to Mrs. Gralaher. And harkee, take the broken chaney cup for a drop of vinegar for the sick woman." As she spoke, she beckoned the boy to her, and whispered, "Tell Mrs. Gralaher, for her soul's sake, to set on a make-b'lieve fight. *She knows the ould trick.* To do it this minute, or it'll be no good; and screech murder and fire; and burn the house, if there's nothing else

for it, till these devils lave the street—which she can see from the back windy.”

The young rascal nodded his head and paddled off with the cup in his hand; and so swiftly did he do his errand that in less than ten minutes there was a riot in the street that effectually called off the police, and enabled the rapparee to escape—not, however, before he had again embraced his wife, who did not recover her consciousness for more than an hour.

Poor Milly was not likely again to require friends: whatever her husband's crimes might have been—and they were those, unhappily, so common, of Whiteboyism—she had no participation in aught but his love; and instead of wanting, she hardly knew what to do with the treasures that were heaped upon her.

When we were leaving Wexford, the “story-teller” made her way through the usual crowd of beggars, and, on the plea of old acquaintanceship, pressed closely to my side. “*He's* safe off, *a bouchla*—out o' the harbour and all; and she's got a scratch of a pen from him to say so! And it's to my thinkin' she'll be soon after him—and why not? But ye'll see herself presently at the ould tree, and—— Stand back,” she said, addressing the crowd who pressed upon us; “stand back, and let me spake to the gentlewoman. It isn't charity I'm askin', so ye needn't keep starin'—chokin' with the envy, like a pack o' sea-gulls over a cockle-bed. And what I was saying is, that, upon my soul, if ye

come fifty times to Wexford (as pray God ye may), I'll never tell ye another lie!—troth I won't. And there's not many as good a story-teller as myself would say that same."

I perfectly agreed with her; and we proceeded on our journey until we arrived at the old tree, beneath whose shadow stood poor Milly; while somewhat farther on the little shoeless, stockingless scout was, as he expressed it, "playing at cuttin' throats" with a still younger reprobate—a nondescript as to age or sex.

Milly was not a person of many words: true sorrow is not eloquent—except in its silence.

I thought I had never seen a picture of more calm and placid beauty, but it was rather the beauty of a statue than of a living woman. Her hair was shaded back, and the thin snowy throat appeared hardly sufficient to sustain the small head upon its slender pedestal. Her cloak was still drawn up in front over her child, and though the infant retained the anxious expression attendant upon starvation, it crowed at the motion of its own fingers, and was evidently gaining strength.

She came close to the window of the carriage and said—

"Will I never see ye at all again? Are ye going away entirely?"

Her lip faltered, and her eyes were swimming in tears.

"Going, Milly; but perhaps not for ever."

"For ever for me—for ever for me; for I shall

be gone far, far before you come back. But God in heaven, who hears my prayer, will bless you wherever you go! May none belonging to you ever know sin or shame! But, lady dear, *he* wasn't as bad as people think—oh no! indeed he wasn't. God bless you more and more! but don't think hard of him. 'Twas the drink, and the bad company—but 'twasn't himself. And sure what'll ail him now, when he has taken an oath against the drink, and is out of the way of temptation, to be as good as he is kind, and, though I say it, handsome!"

How much better I love women than men! how disinterested and self-denying are my own dear sex! The worthless rapparee, who deserved transportation at the very least, was so idolised by that pure and innocent creature that the entire desire of her heart was, not that I should grant her any further relief, but that I should think well of her good-for-nothing husband.

"'Twas the drink and the bad company, but *'twasn't himself!*"

There was a distinction!—none but a loving woman could have ever made such!

NATURALS

My English readers ought, perhaps, to be informed that the Irish natural is not altogether an idiot. Generally, there is so much "mother wit" mixed up with the character as to make it a matter of uncertainty which predominates, knave or fool. Before I relate the story of one of them, I will venture to record a few anecdotes of some of the class, which may best explain its peculiarities.

One I particularly remember, who used to haunt our house, our poultry-yard, our orchard, to the manifest destruction of eggs and apples. He was known by the sobriquet of "Boiled Jack," from the fact of his having, in his childhood, fallen into a brewing-copper. How he escaped with life is a marvel, but his left arm and the left portion of his face were woefully distorted: only for this he would have been a tall, handsome fellow; as it was, he had something rather comical than disagreeable in his aspect, and certainly made his one arm do the business of two. "Boiled Jack" was particularly assiduous in his attentions to the cook, the henwife, and the gardener, but to the henwife in particular, constantly assisting her in mixing the

potatoes for the poultry-yard: as she said, the fowls, the craythurs, were as fond of "Boiled Jack" as of herself. In the housekeeper's room and in the parlour there was a perpetual cry for eggs! The cry continued day after day, morning after morning, but no eggs came. The nests were searched, the henwife scolded. The poor old woman declared the hens were good for nothing—fed and fat they were, and yet they would lay no eggs. This was very provoking; the cook could make no puddings. There was an outcry through the house. What is an Irish house without plenty of everything, but above all plenty of eggs? "How fat 'Boiled Jack' grows!" said the cook. "So he does," echoed the butler. "And sings like a nightingale," exclaimed the kitchen-maid. "Sucking eggs makes sweet voices," chimed in Tom Furlong, the bare-legged whipper-of-all-work to the establishment. "Boiled Jack" was sitting in the chimney-corner, and his eye gleamed upon poor little Tommy with animal ferocity—but for a moment; the next saw him sitting in the same position, rocking backward and forward as if nothing had disturbed him.

Tommy's hint was not, however, lost upon the quick-witted Irishwoman. Partly by threats and partly by large bribes, in the shape of huge pieces of "white bread and fresh butter," Tommy was induced to tell all: that "Boiled Jack" had succeeded in unroofing a portion of the fowl-house; that he robbed the nests every morning at daybreak; that the hens,

who knew him, made no noise; and that, carefully replacing the slates, he proceeded with his prize to a sort of den he had made in the turf-rick, and there sat quietly sucking two or three dozen of his delicate favourites, invariably eating the egg-shells to prevent detection. "Boiled Jack" was watched, the statement was found to be correct, and "Boiled Jack" was forbidden by all the servants to "darken the doors with his ugly carcass" any more. Months passed; the hens behaved as well-fed hens should, and Tommy took "Boiled Jack's" place, increasing in favour with his increasing years. But the natural had not forgotten his denouncer, and one morning, when poor Tom was helping the shepherd to wash the sheep, the idiot sprang upon him from the bank of the river, and holding the boy's head under the water, kept singing out, 'Sucking eggs makes sweet voices—at all!'

It is certain Tommy's singing days would have been soon ended had not the shepherd perceived his danger, and extricated the unfortunate boy from the grasp of the revengeful idiot.

In the retired village of Ballymulty there lived a poor widow, whose name was Jacob. She was decent, sober, and industrious, much loved by her neighbours, and universally respected by the higher orders of society. This woman had three sons, all "born naturals." Handsome fellows they were—singularly well made and finely proportioned, good-tempered, gentle, and, what was very distressing, painfully alive to their infirmity.

They had been sent to school, but had not the power of either reading or writing. One of them had a taste, or rather a love, for drawing, and would sit for hours on his mother's neatly sanded floor, sketching, with a piece of stick, trees and rivers, but above all, angels. Whenever his mother was sick, he would draw her with a pair of monstrous wings, that she might, he said, "the easier fly to God." Indeed, all his ideas and feelings were directed heavenward: he would sit for hours outside the door on a moonlight night gazing up at the heavens, and calling the moon "God's big candle," and the stars "God's little candles." Another, the youngest, I believe, was celebrated all over the country as a stone-mason: he had picked up the business without receiving instruction, and whenever he could be got to work, would do wonders; but no earthly power could induce him to be industrious for more than a fortnight at a time. "Larry, I want you to build me a wall." "How big, yer honour?" "I will tell you when you come." "Can't build the wall unless it's done in a fortnight, yer honour. Can't work for more; all the brains do go out of my poor head every fortnight, yer honour." "Very well, Larry; for the fortnight be it." "And ye'll give me a new blanket for my mother, yer honour?" "Yes, Larry, and a new gown." "Ah! ah! God bless yer honour! a new green gown without a taste of orange in it. Thank yer honour, God bless your honour! may ye never want a blanket or a new

gown." Then he would rush into his mother's cabin, dance over all the pictures his brother had been sketching on the sanded floor, hurrah, jump, give loose to all noisy demonstrations of joy, kiss his poor parent, tell her of the treasures he had secured, go off the next morning to his work, remain at it for the exact fortnight, receive the stipulated clothes for his mother as payment, only accepting twopence in money to buy gingerbread. He set off to the country town to purchase his cakes the next morning, and then rambled, almost without covering, through the woods and the mountains for about a week. He would then return home and be quite ready for another fortnight's employment. These young men were singularly attached to their mother; she would often say, "My poor foolish boys are better to me than many wise children. They never cross nor contradict me in anything. They bring me all they get, and have will to do the good and keep from the bad." This was true; but sorrow came upon them. The widow died, and was buried. Some time after, there was great consternation in the neighbourhood; for the sanctity of the grave had been violated—the widow's dead body stolen. No trace of it could be discovered, and the occurrence was nearly forgotten, when poor Larry, who never sung or worked after his mother's death, refused food, and took to his bed. And the artist brother was often occupied sketching his head, with huge wings at the back. A sort of presentiment

of his death seemed to occupy the mind of this young man; for when not drawing he would sit opposite to Larry, now worn to a skeleton, and hum some of the wild ballads they used to sing together. Many of the poor neighbours, with the characteristic humanity of their country, used to visit and attend to the comfort of the poor stonemason, who was everywhere a favourite. At last he was given over, and the parish priest paid him a visit. "You're not going to take me from my mother?" said Larry feebly. "Take ye from your mother! Oh no, my poor fellow. No, you are going to her, I hope." "I know I am," replied the natural, "if you let me alone. But you put her in holy ground, where you would not put the fool! And the fool knew that, and stole her away, and put her under the old beech tree in the hollow, where she is now, and where Jemmy'll put his poor brother Larry." It was all true; the remains of the widow Jacob had been stolen away by her affectionate son, who laboured under the impression that, as he was a fool, they would not bury him in consecrated ground.

Poll Pos was another idiot, of whom, as a child, I was dreadfully afraid. Poll was a dirty, imbecile, good-tempered creature, ever begging for tea and sugar—tea and sugar—and resisting most strenuously every effort that could be made to disencumber her of those dirty rags wherewith she was clothed. Whenever I was naughty (which was some ten times a day) I was threatened with

MOLLY CAREW

From a Painting by

ERSKINE NICOL, R.S.A.

"Ochone, and what will I do?
Since my Love is all crost
Like a bud in the frost,
And there's no use at all in my going to bed,
For it's drhames and not sleep that comes into my head,
And it's all about you,
My sweet Molly Carew,
Indeed, it's a sin and a shame!"

Sam Lover.



Poll Pos. Poll, I devoutly believed, had a great bag to carry away bad children; and this bag I knew was crammed full of dirty bones and scraps of bread. Consequently Poll and her bag were my aversion; no wonder she never possessed any interest for me, and only inspired me with terror and disgust. Nevertheless, she was a quiet, harmless being. Poor Poll. Like the fair Ophelia, she was found drowned in a river where she had gone, not for the sake of an ablution, but to gather wild flowers, of which she was really fond. The dirty creature would cherish a rose for an hour together, and weep if it was taken from her.

Mary Carey, poor thing! was ever to me a creature of singular interest and beauty. She was delicately neat in her person: her skin was clean, her complexion fair, her long glossy hair hung in natural curls over her brow, and her tight dress of coarse black stuff (she never would wear any colour but black) free from spot or blemish. She was always scrubbing and cleaning—rub, rub, rub—and her blue but usually lustreless eyes would light up with an expression, or rather a glare, of pleasure. Whenever she saw anything that was particularly clean, she would express her delight by rubbing against it and stroking it with her hands. I have heard that poor Mary was frightened at the crimes that were perpetrated in the rebellion of ninety-eight, when she was quite a child. Her father was piked on the bridge of Wexford, and her mother was burnt in the barn of Scullabogue. Mary was then but four years

old. She had been for some days a prisoner with her mother in that horrid barn, and was released only by the energy of her unfortunate parent, who, when the burning rafters were falling around her, threw forth poor Mary, who was taken up and was kindly treated by one of the insurgents. She was, however, a perfectly witless, though a quiet, contented creature, imploring a blessing upon all, whether they treated her ill or well. At one time she was absent from our neighbourhood nearly two years, and when she returned, to the horror of all, Mary Carey had a baby at her breast—a smiling, fair, intelligent-looking thing, whom she took infinite delight in washing. The small-pox was raging in the village, and the poor baby took it. Mary could not be brought to comprehend the nature of the disease—she persisted in fancying the eruption dirt, and, taking the infant to the shore, she scoured it literally to death with sea-sand. Poor Mary! she was never heard to speak or seen to smile afterwards; but whenever she met a woman with a child in her arms, she would wring her hands and weep bitterly.

With one of the most interesting and inoffensive of the class I made acquaintance among the beautiful ruins of Dunbrody Abbey. This splendid relic of the olden time is situated in the barony of Shelbourne, on the banks of the river Barrow, and well repays the traveller for the trouble of visiting its extensive remains. The site is well sheltered, and possesses the advantages of inland navigation. Those jolly monks had right good taste, and chose

the situation of their monasteries with both wit and wisdom. The interior walls of the church are in a beautiful state of preservation, and on each side of the chancel are three vaulted chapels. The great aisle is divided into three parts by a double row of arches, supported by square piers; the inside of those arches is ornamented by a rich moulding, and conveys an idea of the enormous care and expense that must have been bestowed upon the building. The tower appears to be rather low in proportion to the extent of the whole, but it is supported by a magnificent arch. There is a sort of narrow walk on the summit of the walls, which commands a superb and extensive view of the adjacent country. The cloisters appear to have been spacious, but their foundations alone remain, and it was curious to trace them out amid the weeds and long grass, which waved and triumphed in all the pride of summer existence over the relics of antiquity. Nearer to the centre of the abbey are a number of ruined walls, which indicate where the hall, the refectory, and the dormitory stood. I can fancy nothing appealing more powerfully to the imagination than these noble ruins.

"Two or three columns, and many a stone,
Marble and granite, with grass o'ergrown!
Out upon Time! it will leave no more
Of the things to come, than the things before.
Out upon Time! who for ever will leave
But enough of the past for the future to grieve
O'er that which has been, and o'er that which must be.
What we have seen our sons shall see:
Remnants of things that have passed away,
Fragments of stone raised by creatures of clay!"

We all value, while we mourn over, the ruins of the past—and the greater the desolation the greater our regret. The western window of this noble pile is of an uncommon form, and though nearly entire, gives symptoms of a decay which a little care and attention on the part of the proprietor might easily prevent. The door immediately beneath it is very magnificent, being adorned with filagree open-work, cut out of the solid stone, and so raised as to allow a finger easily to pass under its carvings. It was a fine day in August when we walked up the avenue leading to this time-honoured ruin; the dimness of the morning had brightened into sunshine, and the dark masses of ivy contrasted brightly with the grey stone and light green of the fresh grass, while the many-tinted mosses appeared like an exquisite mosaic of rich and curious tracery.

As we entered one of the outward courts, a troop of innocent calves, frightened at our appearance, crowded beneath a gateway, where, perhaps, Richard Earl of Pembroke had often stood in his shining armour, and looked upon the increasing walls that now crumbled beneath our feet. The silvery Barrow murmured on its way, and could have told us much of what its waters witnessed in the olden time of fray and foray, of banquet, fast, and stately pageant. While we paused and looked upon Dunbrody with that species of awe which enforces silence, the puny sound of a tin trumpet quivered upon the air, and would have made little impression upon us had it

not been followed by a shout of loud yet heartless laughter.

The church is protected by a gate ; and as we wound round one of the towers to gain the entrance, we encountered the idiot, who had been making merry within the sanctuary. He was a tall, slight youth, with large, lustreless eyes, not unlike "poor Johnny, poor Jack," of Wexford memory, save that in his person he was delicately clean ; and his dress was so fantastic that I cannot resist the temptation of describing it. He wore what are called Hessian boots, with white pantaloons. His jacket was tight, but, with the exception of the sleeves, it was impossible to tell what materials it was composed of ; for behind hung a sort of rude, short cloak, made of the fur of hare, rabbit, fox, and, I really believe, every animal "that ever wore a hairy skin." Around his neck were suspended a tin trumpet and various baubles ; amongst them shone conspicuously a huge leaden watch, upon which, poor fellow ! his eye often rested. His flat fur cap was adorned with a number of long scarlet tassels, that floated over his shoulders as he moved restlessly from place to place. There was an air of gentility in his manner, a gentle courtliness in his salutation, and a tastefulness in his piebald costume, which conquered both the dread and dislike I feel towards Irish naturals. We speedily became acquainted. He told me his name was Johnny Welch ; answered every question I chose to ask. "Where did he live ?" He lived here. He loved the ould abbey ; he knew every stone, every turn

of it. It was a fine ould place—a *pleasant place* to live in.

"Where did he sleep?"

"In there" (pointing to a low vaulted room), "in there he slept *with the dead men*: there was a heap of their bones."

"Was he not afraid?"

He laughed wildly. "No; what had he to be afraid of? Would he root up some of the dead men's bones for my honour to look at?" and before I had time to reply, he threw himself upon a heap of clay, and insinuated his long muscular fingers into the earth so effectually as to bring up bone after bone with the rapidity of lightning. These relics of mortality he briefly descanted upon as he tossed them from him to "root" for others. "There's a skull—a fine skull—a big skull—hould a dale o' brain: the people long ago had a power o' wit! There's a bone—a thigh bone—a great soldier, maybe—a strong bone! I sleeps upon dead men's bones. The abbey's a pleasant place! There's a *weechy* bone—a lady's arm—a pretty bone! Shall I root more for ye? Another skull! There's a hole in it; a murdered skull. Hurrah for the fight!—hurrah for the fun! Shall I root more for ye?"

I felt my heart sicken: it was such a painful lesson to see that poor idiot boy sporting so fearlessly with the relics of mortality; to note the eagerness with which he disinterred those memorials of decay; to see folly and rags fluttering like a butterfly over what once contained the essence of God's own spirit.

I was really sick, and leaned for some moments against a pillar before I could leave the painful spot. At last he turned his head, and looking up kindly in my face, he exclaimed, "Lady grow pale!—bury the bones!" which he did so quickly and so effectually that in three minutes the sun's rays rested only on a mound of fresh-turned earth.

Amongst other things that were slung round his neck was a fox's head. We wanted him to sell it. "No, he would not—Colonel Piggott and the gentlemen of the hunt would go mad with him if he parted with it—he loved hunting—he often went hunting with the gentlemen—they were very good to him—why then should he give away their fox's head?" Not even a bright shilling should tempt him to part with it. Poor fellow! I shall long remember Johnny Welch as the most pleasing fool (notwithstanding his taste for bones) I ever encountered. The generality of Irish naturals are the most disgusting specimens of humanity produced in any country; but Johnny was clean, and (but for the vacancy of look, and the universal habit that idiots possess of turning in their toes) exceedingly handsome, and even graceful in his appearance; he solicited no charity—pleaded neither hunger nor poverty—and though he followed us over the abbey, he did not speak except when spoken to, and evinced a mild and gentle temper.

I learnt from two shepherd boys that Johnny's mother was a respectable widow; that she would give "the world and all if her son would stop at home

with her, which he was too fond of the ruins of Dunbrody to do; that he was born *innocent*; and that everybody liked him."

This I could readily believe, for as we were about to enter our carriage I felt sorry to think I should never see poor Johnny again. I turned to bid him adieu as he was seated on the wall which separates the lands of Dunbrody from the road, looking a fantastic figure to so magnificent a background. There he sat, his broad flat watch resting on his open palm, while his gaze was earnestly fixed on its motionless hands.

I now proceed to relate a story in which a poor boy of the class "natural" occupies a prominent part. I call it *THE LAST IN THE LEASE*.

There are persons now living who remember well the excitement produced in the county in which it occurred by the appalling event that forms its groundwork. It was related to me by a clergyman who, under the name of "Martin Doyle," has published a variety of little works upon rural and domestic economy, the value of which, to the Irish farmer and cottager, is greater than pure gold.

It is singular that while the tale was in the hands of the printer, a murder was committed at Windgap, near Kilkenny, under circumstances very similar and with the same object—a resolve to get rid of the last life in a lease. Unhappily, in this case, the attempt was successful.

"Why, then, Grace, where was the good of all the larning I gave you, girl darlint, if you won't read us what's on the paper? Sure it's pleasant, at times, to hear the news."

"Uncle dear, sure it's all the pleasure in life I'd have in accommodating you," replied Grace, still continuing to twirl her wheel, "only that, you see, I can't read and spin at the same time."

"What news you tell us," persisted Corney Burnett, or, as he was commonly called, "Black Burnett." "What news you tell us. Who ever expected you to read and spin at the same time? And indeed, dear Grace, it's glad of an excuse I'd be, set aside the reading, to get you from your wheel. The bur and the twirl of it's never out of my eyes nor ears."

"It's eager to make the linen I am, to keep us clean and comfortable—and you above all, uncle. To see you comfortable, sure, is the pride of my life, to say nothing of the blessing."

"Thank you, Grace: I believe it from my heart. And why shouldn't I? Since the day I promised my poor brother (God be good to him!) to be a father to the both of you, I never had an aching heart on *your* account, anyhow."

"Nor on account of poor Michael either, uncle. Poor Michael, for the sense God has left in him, is as good a boy as is to be found in a month of Sundays."

"Ay," replied Burnett sorrowfully; "but it's very mournful to see him sitting there, staring into the

turf fire, and seeming to care for nothing on the living earth but that cur of a dog."

"Snap loves him dearly: it's wonderful, so it is, to see how he watches every turn Michael takes; the poor baste's eye is never tired looking at him, nor his ear never shut to his voice," said Grace, putting aside her wheel, and unfolding the remnants of a tattered newspaper.

"Read the news, read the news," reiterated the half-idiot boy, who had been, as his uncle truly said, staring into the turf fire, his dog curled round his feet, and his long bony fingers clasped over his knees. "Read the news, Grace. What you see wrong in others, mend in yourself. What you see wrong in others, mend in yourself. Is that the news, Grace?"

Grace could hardly forbear smiling at the rapidity with which he pronounced and repeated a sentence that had obtained for him the sobriquet of "Preaching Michael," and she replied, "I think, Mick, honey, it would be news if people did so."

"Ay," repeated the idiot, "what you see wrong in others, mend in yourself."

"Hold your whisht, will you?" exclaimed Black Burnett. "What name's to the paper you've got, Grace?"

"That's more than I can tell you, uncle dear," replied the gentle girl; "for the name's clean tore off. But sure it's no matter for the name; one paper's as good as another."

"Oh, be quiet now! Don't you mind that some

papers are for one side, and some for t'other; and both can't be right—that's an impossibility. How ould is it?"

"I can't tell that either, uncle; but it can't be very ould, for just down here it says that small bonnets are all the thing, and the last time Mrs. Hays, of the Grate House, was past here, she had a hat like a griddle; so, as she's tiptop, she'd have tiptop fashions. Why not? So I'm sure the paper's not over a fortnight printed, any way."

"Well, read what they're after saying in the big House o' Parliament, and all about Counsillor Dan. Read every word, not as you did the last loan of a paper I had. Barney Doolan told me twice as much out of it as you read, Grace."

"Barney made it, then," exclaimed Grace, nevertheless colouring deeply, for she knew the charge was not altogether unfounded, as she was in the habit of skipping a great deal. "Barney made the news, I say, uncle; for I read it from top to bottom—and then again and again—and most of it backwards, to plase you: it took me as long as I'd spin a pound of flax, so it did."

"I wish I knew if that paper was one of the right sort," said Burnett, without heeding her observation.

"I'm sure it is," she replied; "for at the very top it begins with 'Father Mulvaney's Sarmon.'"

"A priest's sarmon put on the paper," repeated the good man, rubbing his hands gleesomely, and drawing his "creepie" closer to the fire; "let's have it, Grace. Now show your fine larning, my

girl;—but asy, there—first let me light my *doodeen*. Augh!" he continued, after screwing up his tobacco in a piece of dirty brown paper and thrusting it into a hole in the wall "for safety," "Augh! Grady's tobacco isn't worth a farthing a pound—he always keeps it in paper."

"What you see wrong in others, mend in yourself," exclaimed the natural.

"He has you there," laughed pretty Grace, as she glanced at the paper ends sticking out of the wall.

"Read the sarmon—one at a time, if you plase, Miss Grace," said Burnett, looking serious; but Grace, before she did her uncle's bidding, sprang up and kissed his wrinkled cheek affectionately, whispering, "You are not angry with your own poor Grace?" The seriousness passed from the old man's brow, and Grace commenced showing her larning. She had not finished the first sentence, however, when she stopped and said, "Uncle, it's very strange, but this sarmon is spelt quare—not in good English."

"A mighty fine judge you are, to be sure," replied Burnett, again roused to the "short passing anger." "A mighty fine scholar you must be to faut a priest's sarmon and the printing of a newspaper! I suppose you'll be for preaching and printing yourself."

Grace recommenced—

"Boys and girls—but most particular boys—we must all die! Ay, indeed, die—as sure as grass grows or wather runs. Now you see that the grate

min of *ould* times are all dead! Not a mortal sowl of thim all alive.' Uncle," said Grace, pausing, "do you think that's true?"

"True!" repeated Black Burnett, not looking in the mildest manner from under the deep and shaggy brows which had gained him his cognomen; "to be sure; and to all reason it's true. Show me one of the people of ould times that's alive."

"Molly Myran, of Crag's-pass, near Carrickburn's above a hundred," replied Grace, who feared, she hardly knew why, that the sermon was a sort of quiz upon the priesthood, though she dared not say so.

"Molly Myran!" again repeated her uncle contemptuously. "God help the child! Sure no one's worth talking of amongst the rale ancients that's less than a thousand or two! Go on with the sarmon."

Grace continued—

"There was Julius Casar, and twelve of them there was. *Mortus est!*—he's dead!"

"Morty who?" inquired Burnett sharply.

"*Mortus est!*—M-O-R," continued poor Grace, reading and then spelling the letters.

"I hope you're reading what's on the paper," persisted her uncle doubtfully.

"As true as gospel," she replied, "that is what I'm reading. 'There was the grate Cleopatra, an Egyptian, and a grate warrior; he used to dhrink *purls* for *wather*. *Mortus est!*—he's dead too! There was Marc Anthony, a grate frind and co-

ajuthor of Cleopatra's; he had a grate turn for boating and the like. *Mortus est!*—he's dead too! There was Charleymange, a grate Frinch man of larning and tongues, and with all his larning—*mortus est!*—he's dead too! There was the grate Alexandre, the ginerall of the whole wide world!"

"Lord save us!" ejaculated the old man, as he knocked the ash out of his pipe against a stone which projected from the back of the chimney.

"The whole wide world!" repeated Grace; "he used to roar and bawl whenever he couldn't set a faction fight afoot; and it isn't at that he'd stop, if he had his own way, for it was all fun to him. *Mortus est!*—he's dead too! There was the great Cicero, a mighty fine pracher, like myself. *Mortus est!*—he's dead too! There was the wonderful Arkimedayes. He was a great magician, an admiral, and a navigator; he used to set ships o' fire by just looking at them through a spy-glass. He had an eye, boys, like a process. *Mortus est!*—he's dead too!—"

"Grace," interrupted the old man, "I believe, after all, you're right. I wish I had the name of that paper. I don't think it's of the true sort, so I'll *roul* it up, put it into my pocket, show it to his reverence at the 'station' on Friday, and ask him if the sarmon's a right one."

"Just let me go over it a bit first," said Grace, intending doubtless to refer to the paragraphs on fashion, as all girls in Ireland and out of Ireland invariably do. "Sure, I'm not so fond of spending

my time at anything of the sort." She continued looking over column after column, until at last she came to a name she thought she had heard her uncle speak of.

"Didn't you know one James Kenneth, uncle?"

"To be sure I did, Grace. What has honest Jemmy been after to be put on the paper?"

"He's dead, uncle."

"The Lord be good to us!" ejaculated the old man. "James Kenneth was fifteen years to the good younger than me!—My poor Grace!"

"Why, what had I to do with him?" inquired the girl, astonished at her uncle's earnestness.

"Not much, to be sure—and yet you had, Grace, as a body may say."

"But what's very strange, uncle, is, that just under his death is the death of his son Thomas—a young man in his seventeenth year!"

Grace was so intent on the paragraph—for people are always touched by the deaths of those who are nearly their own age—that she kept her eyes fixed on the paper, and it was some minutes before she perceived that a deadly pallor had overspread her uncle's countenance. She sprang from her seat, when she looked up, and flinging her arms round his neck, inquired if he was ill.

I have observed the manifestations of joy and grief in the inhabitants of many lands. The Scotch are wisely taught from infancy to subdue their feelings; they bring them at an early period of life under a quaker-like subjection, which, though

decidedly advantageous to themselves, shadows a coldness upon the feelings of others. The expressions of English sympathy or anxiety, though the sincerest in the world, are blunt and ungraceful. You feel that those of French tenderness are tricked and garlanded with a view to effect; their tears are shed after a form—their sorrow is made picturesque. But the anxiety, the earnestness, the truthfulness of Irish sympathy, sorrow, tenderness, burst uncontrolled from the heart—the *young* heart I should say, for *old* hearts learn how to regulate their feelings; and it is well they do, for otherwise they would go hackled and tortured to their graves. To one accustomed only to the well-bred griefs of modern society, the earnest and gushing sympathy with which an Irish girl enters into the joys, griefs, hopes, and fears of those she loves, presents quite a new and delightful reading of human nature—it is most beautiful and eloquent in its character! She loses all consideration of self: she weeps—she laughs—because those she loves weep or laugh. She forgets that she is a separate creation, and feels as if created for her friends—friends!—The word is all too cold to express her devotion; it must be seen to be understood; excited, or it can never be appreciated as it deserves. Grace Burnett was a creature of smiles and tears—a sunbeam or a shadow. She had never been seen to frown, though she was often sad, because her uncle was at times moody, even to ill-temper. The neighbours said they sometimes

THE LEASE REFUSED

From a Painting by
ERSKINE NICOL, R.S.A.

pitied her; had they understood the happiness she felt in soothing his irritations, they would have envied her her delight when saying, "No one can please my dear uncle half as well as I." Grace was proud of the influence her affectionate gentleness had gained over Black Burnett. And now, when she hung round him and inquired so earnestly if he was ill, and what troubled him, she thought her heart would break at his continued silence. Even her idiot brother seemed to sympathise with her—he fidgeted on his seat, looked at her, shuffled his fingers through his hair, and at last came and stood by her side.

"Something's come entirely over him that I've no skill in," she said at last despairingly. "Mick, speak to him, Mick—he'll mind you, maybe."

"What you see wrong in others, mend in yourself," muttered the idiot.

"Ay, Grace—my poor Grace—and that's it sure enough," said her uncle, recovering from his stupor—"that's it! The sarmon that poor natural preaches was evermore in my ear, and maybe that was the reason it did not reach my heart: 'What you see wrong in others, mend in yourself.' Wasn't I constant at Mr. Hanway of Mount Grove to get a lease of years, instead of lives, for his farm?—Didn't I worry Mr. Maguire till he had his lease properly drawn? And when forty acres of the best arable land in the county went clean out of the hands of Nicholas Cruise, who passed so many censures on his carelessness as Black Burnett?"

"What you see wrong in others, mend in yourself," again said Michael.

"By the blessed saints!" exclaimed Burnett, his agitated feelings taking another turn, and glad of escape by words or violence, "if you repeat that to me again, you poor tantalising, ill-featured fool! I'll find if there's any brains in your skull! It's a purty thing for you to be reproaching me, that nursed you since you came out of your shell."

Michael and Snap paired off into the chimney-corner, and Grace burst into tears.

"Ay, cry—you may well cry, Grace; but it's no use. I'm ould, and almost helpless,—and God only knows,"—continued the farmer, as he paced up and down the spacious kitchen which his father and grandfather had trod before him,—“God only knows how long I may be in the land of the living; and then, Grace, then what is to become of you?”

"Me, uncle?"

"Ay, you, uncle!—Why, you're growing as great an *omwdaun* as your brother!"

Grace feared to ask a question, but still the tears rained down her cheeks.

"Haven't you heard me say that I had three lives in the new lease of this place: James Kenneth and his son Thomas,—Thomas, who was born the same year as you, my poor Grace,—and—but the Lord forgive me, what an ould sinner I am!—Tom Kenneth cut off, as a body may say, in the very bud of his youth—the same age as you, Gracy—within a week the same age,—yet he is

taken,—a fine, strong, healthy boy—he is taken; and you, a delicate, weakly girl, but the delight and treasure of your uncle's heart—you are left upon the earth, and in my own house, to bless it, as you have always done. God forgive me my sins!—but I was always a passionate man—hot, and hasty. You'll forgive me, my child?"

The old man kissed the daughter of his heart and his adoption; and in the twinkling of an eye the sorrow passed from her lovely face—quicker than she could wipe away the tears.

"Sure, thanks be to God, I've heard you say that your own life's in the lease, and sure that's to the good still, and will be, please the Almighty, for many a long day to come. And, uncle dear, maybe the landlord would still renew it upon years; and even if he didn't, don't fret on our account, for——"

Before she could finish her sentence there was a loud knock at the cottage door. Snap, in his eagerness to investigate the character and demands of the visitor, overturned the wheel, and without heeding the mischief he had done, poked his snub nose through an aperture in the post, and growled angrily. The doors of Irish cottages are seldom fastened; indeed, during recent years, notwithstanding what is called in England "the *disturbed* state of the country," I slept more than a week in the house of a Conservative gentleman, residing in the midst of a Catholic community, whose doors and windows were never disfigured by bolt, bar, or

lock, though the house was known to contain much plate and some firearms. I question if this could occur in any part of *undisturbed* England!

The visitor opened the door at which he had knocked before Burnett had time to raise the latch; but Grace, as her uncle turned to do so, made time enough to whisper Michael, "if you'll be a good boy, and not repeat what vexed uncle just now, for three days I'll give you a rosy-cheeked apple, and butter to the potatoes for a week." Mick laughed with delight, and Grace finished her speech just in time to say, "Kindly welcome," illustrated by a pretty curtsy to the muffled-up stranger who was now standing in the midst of the apartment. He was a stout, thick-set man, whose blue great-coat, strong brogues, and well-fitting beaver told of his belonging to the "warmer" portion of the commonalty; his "shillalah" was more carved than as it is usually seen in a countryman's hand, and when he politely removed his hat his brown clustering hair curled around a handsome yet disagreeable countenance—at least, so Grace considered it. She thought of the simile in the mock sermon she had just read of "a look being as bad as a process"; and after dusting a chair with her apron, and pushing it towards him, she waited, expecting that he would speak in reply to the friendly greetings he had already received. He stood, however, in his old position, looking alternately at Burnett, at Grace, at Michael, and then investigating, with curious eye, every article of

furniture in the kitchen: the delf neatly arranged upon the dresser; the three deal chairs; the stools and "bosses"; the noggins; the settle; the clock, that most unusual piece of furniture in an Irish cottage; a small work-table; and a neat bookshelf "facing the dresser"—all were carefully scrutinised—until at last Burnett became annoyed at his visitor's rudeness, and in a rough tone said "he hoped he liked all he saw, for he would be sure to know them again."

"Ay," replied the man; "like, to be sure I do—everything here is to be liked—and"—his eye glanced familiarly at Grace—"loved, for the matter of that; but——" He paused, and looked round again—and again.

"It's a wild night, and I'm thinking you'd better take an air of the fire," said Burnett.

"Thank ye, so I will; it feels very comfortable," said the stranger, walking under the shadow of the wide chimney, and spreading out his hands to the heat, which Grace had increased by the addition of some "sods" of turf. "The boy—a natural; the dog," he continued, talking aloud, and yet as if to himself; "the dog—the pretty girl. Everything exactly as I saw it. It is very strange!"

"May I make so bould as to ask what is so strange?" inquired Burnett.

"Everything—everything here," he replied, turning his back to the fire, and again surveying the apartment.

"Nothing out of the common, sir, barring

Grace's little work-table—a compliment from the carpenter," observed the simple-minded man, while Grace blushed beautifully at the allusion to her—(truth will out)—her lover!

"Stranger and stranger still," resumed the traveller; "and that *that* young lady's name should be Grace!"

"Young lady!" repeated Burnett. "She's an honest man's daughter, and a good little girl, but no lady."

"She's your niece, and that poor fellow's your nephew, and that dog's name is Snap, and your name is Corney Burnett, commonly called Black Corney, or Black Burnett."

"Holy Mary defend us!" ejaculated Grace, crossing herself; even Mick opened his large brown eyes; while their uncle said, "Why, then, it's known you must be among the neighbours, though you're strange to me, and your tongue's not of this country."

"I have walked seventeen miles since I entered a house. I was never in this part of the world before—and I was born in foreign parts; and yet I am as much at home here as if I had lived in the parish all my life! Every stick of your furniture I feel as used to as if it had been my own!"

Black Burnett crossed himself as he turned to look round his cottage, and Grace slid slyly out of the kitchen into her little chamber, and, dipping her fingers in the vase of holy water that hung at the head of her humble bed, sprinkled herself with

it; wetting her fingers again, so that, on her return to the kitchen, she might convey a few drops to her brother's person. Her uncle wore a scapular, so she considered *him* safe.

"Why, then, may I ask again how you gained your information?" questioned Burnett, as he seated himself opposite his mystifying guest, who on Grace's return was seated also.

"Indeed you may," he replied; "and what's not always the case, I'll answer you—I *dreamt it!*" Upon this there was a loud exclamation, and a general crossing succeeded. Their visitor looked round and smiled. "Do not be ashamed of your religion, my good friends; I have been in many countries, and one religion's as good as another if it's acted up to—that's my belief. Cross yourself again, my pretty maid, and you too, Master Burnett, and I will tell you how it was—but first let me ask, is there not a deep line of sand-pits near this, a little way off the road leading to the left?"

"There is!" replied the uncle and niece together.

"And—now mark me!—is there not a very large elm tree a few perches farther on?"

"There is!" responded the same voices.

"And when you pass that, you descend a steep green valley?"

"You do!"

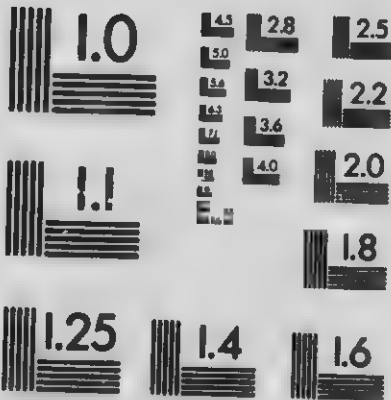
"At the foot of the valley runs a bright clear stream, with a bridge over it?"

"There *did* run a stream there," said Burnett;



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"but Peter Pike turned it into his milldam, as I told him, contrary to nature and Act of Parliament; so that now there's a bridge without any water under it."

The traveller's countenance fell, but it brightened immediately, and he continued: "And farther down that stream are the ruins of an old abbey; and under the south window of that abbey stands a broad, flat marble stone?"

"Ay, true enough," said Burnett; "I've pegged my top on it many a time when I was a boy."

"Peter Pike, then, has not turned that stone into his milldam," persisted the stranger, smiling; "and as it remains there—why, my friend, our fortune's made—that's all!"

"I don't see—I don't understand. You've not insensed me into it yet," said Burnett.

"The time's not come for telling all; I have said enough to prove to you that, without ever having been here before, I knew exactly what I have told, and more too, which, when I have had some refreshment, you shall know."

What the Irish peasant has to give, he gives freely, be it much or little. Hospitality has been called the virtue of savage life. Be it so; its exercise is delightful to the wayfarer. As the evening advanced, it was evident that, notwithstanding Grace's desire to hear all the stranger had to communicate, he was not disposed to gratify her curiosity, and she and her brother were soon dismissed to their beds. There was a half-finished

closet inside Grace Burnett's little room, which served, if truth must be told, as the nursing chamber of a pet calf, which she was rearing with more than ordinary care; for the creature was milk-white, devoid of spot or blemish, and consequently regarded with superstitious tenderness. As the stranger was to occupy Mick's bed, the poor natural was content to share the calf's straw; but when his sister went to cover him with a super-numerary blanket, she found him sitting, his arms enfolding the neck of his favourite dog, and his eyes staring with the expression of one who listens attentively.

"Go to sleep, Michael."

"Whisht!" exclaimed the boy, holding up his finger.

"What ails you, astore?"

"Whisht!" he again repeated.

"Lie down, Michael."

"No, no; I saw—whisht!—I saw what Lanty Pike kills the birdeens with peepin', peepin', peepin' in the strange man's breast. I saw the muzzle of it—he! he! Uncle's the fool, if uncle trusts him. Whisht!"

The astonishment occasioned by the stranger's story at once faded from Grace's mind; but if it did, her first impression revived with tenfold strength. How was her uncle to make his fortune? What connection could he have with the traveller's dream, or the broad flat stone in the old grey ab'ey? Her spirit sank within her. A tithe-

proctor had been murdered about two years before, and thrown into the gravel-pit. Her heart beat feebly within her bosom, and half creeping, half staggering to the door of her chamber, she put her eye close to the latch-hole, and saw, to her astonishment, her uncle evidently preparing to accompany the stranger out, though the night was dark and stormy. The traveller was already equipped, and Black Burnett was putting on his "big coat." Nor did it escape the girl's observation that the whisky bottle was nearly empty, and that, though the stranger was perfectly sober, her uncle's cheek was flushed and his step unsteady. She was about to let them see that she was not gone to bed, and to entreat her uncle not to go forth that night, when she remembered that their cottage was "a good step" from any other dwelling, and that, if their mysterious guest intended violence, he could easily overpower a half-drunken man and a feeble girl—poor Michael was always counted as nothing. She saw her uncle take up his spade from out of the corner, and, notwithstanding the stranger's entreaties to be permitted to carry it, she was pleased to observe he persisted in his determination to bear it himself. A tremor she could not account for came over her, and, as they closed the outer door, she nearly fainted.

Black Burnett and his visitor proceeded on their way in the direction of the gravel-pits.

"You're sure of the road?" inquired the stranger.

"Am I sure that this is my own hand?" replied

Burnett: "first the gravel-pits, then the bridge—no, then the elm—then the bridge—then the ould abbey—then the flat stone! Ah! what will the neighbours say when Grace flourishes off to mass on a side-saddle? And to think of your bringing me such news just as I'd got into the doldrums about the lease! Three days—three nights, I mean—since you dreamt of the goold?"

"Three, exactly."

"Under the flat stone?"

"Ay! Do let me carry the spade; and see, as we seem to be on the edge of a gravel-pit, had you not better walk next to it? You know it, and I don't."

"I thought you said you war up to every turn of the crag, through the drame?"

"Ay, to be sure; but give me the spade."

"I tell you I won't. Haven't you the bag that's to carry home the red goold? Lord, how they will all stare! Grace shan't put off ould uncle then with a bottle of whisky—I'll have a whole cask! Whir, man alive! can't you walk straight, as I do? You almost had me over the edge of the pit, and there's good six feet wather in the bottom of it. There, just where the moon shines, is the elm tree, and——"

In all human probability the word would have been his last, for the murderer's grasp was on the arm of his intended victim, but that Michael—the half-idiot Michael—with a whoop and a halloo, bearing a lighted stick in his hand, rushed so closely by them that the sparks of his wild brand starred

the stranger's coat ; while Snap, hearing his master's voice, barked either in glee or anger.

"Hurroo ! hurroo ! Uncle, uncle, here's the light for your's or the devil's pipe ! Hurroo ! night-rovers—ill-gatherers ! Hurroo ! hurroo !" And shouting and jumping, Michael kept before his uncle, now tossing his torch into the air, and then whirling it round his head.

"Send the cub to his den," said the stranger, in so fierce a tone of voice that the inebriated Burnett noted the change, and turned a look on his companion.

"Send the idiot home," he continued, "or, by the Lord, I'll send him somewhere else," and, as he spoke, he drew a pistol from his vest.

The sight of the weapon sobered the old man in a moment. "Stop, stop !" he exclaimed. "If you hurt a hair of that boy's head, you'll pay for it—that's all. You're no true man to draw a pistol on such a natural as that ; besides, what use have you for the firearms ?"

"Use," repeated the traveller. "Why, you know your country has not the reputation of being the quietest in the world. So for my own personal safety——"

"Quietest !" repeated Burnett. "I'll trouble you not to say anything against the country. I'm thinking you're not the sort I took you for—to offer to fire at a poor natural, whom every man in the parish would fight to purtect ; and then to abuse ould Ireland !"

"My good friend," interrupted the stranger, "let me beg of you to send that boy home. To trust our secret with an idiot would be absurd in the extreme."

"As to getting Michael in, when Michael would rather be out, I might as well tie a rat with a sugan. There's no use in gainsaying the poor natural. So I'm thinking the night is so wild, and that craythur so bent upon watching what I'm afther, that we'd better go back. To-morrow night will do just as well."

"If you'd just let me frighten him with a flash in the pan, it would send him to bed as gentle as a fawn."

"Flash in the pan! God help you, man alive! the whisper of a pistol even would send Michael over the whole town land before you could say Bannacher; and he'd have a crowd round us that would beat a priest's funeral to nothing. No, no; all we've for it to-night is to go back and be asy."

Burnett was determined, and his companion was compelled to submit, after trying in vain to impress upon the farmer's mind that, as it was the third night after the dream, it was particularly favourable for such an adventure.

"Sure the goold is there, and if it has stayed there for maybe a hundred or two years, what's to take it away now, or before to-morrow night?" argued Black Burnett; but I much doubt if the idea would have influenced him had not the sight of the pistol roused his suspicions, or, as he said himself,

if something had not "come over him" that turned him homeward.

The next morning the stranger lingered about the cottage, making himself familiar with every winding and path in the vicinity, and trying, as it is called, to "make friends" with Michael. Michael, however, was true to his first feelings, and eyed the visitor as a shy dog may often be observed to regard a person who has treated him secretly with harshness, and yet would wish to be on outward terms of civility. He offered him gingerbread—Michael threw it in the fire; nuts—he flung them back into his lap. In the favour of Grace he made no progress either. His compliments were unregarded; and, to complete his mortification, the favoured carpenter came there for a day or two. He could not help thinking that the carpenter had been sent for, either by Grace or Michael, as a spy upon his actions. He saw that every movement he made, every word he spoke was watched, and whatever plan of action he had formed was evidently frustrated for the present. Black Burnett talked to his guest eagerly of the anticipated treasure; whatever suspicions or fears had been awakened in his mind had passed away with the darkness of night, and his habitual incaution and natural obstinacy tended to make him as easy a prey as a designing person could desire. The next night it blew a perfect hurricane—the sort of storm which a strong man cannot stand in—and the thunder and lightning sported in their fierceness with the winds and rain. The door of the cottage was

forced in more than once; and as the fire gleamed upon the stranger's face (for he had gathered himself up, silent, moody, and disappointed, in Burnett's chimney-corner), Grace could hardly forbear thinking him the incarnation of an evil spirit. The more terrific the storm the more Michael rejoiced. He leaped—he clapped his hands; he seemed to his sister as if under the impression that his uncle owed his safety to the war of elements, which shook to the foundation their humble dwelling. At intervals the visitor and his host would look out upon the night, but it was only to return with discomfited aspects to their seats.

"Uncle," said Grace, drawing him gently aside, "uncle darlint, I want to spake a word to ye. It's about the lase, uncle. Matthew" (her lover) "has tould me that the landlord himself will be passing through Ross to-morrow, and he doesn't want any of us to know it, because he's always bothered about lases and the like; and you are sensible no Irish gentleman in the world likes to be tormented about business of any kind—he'd rather let it take its own course without toil; but Matthew says, uncle, that maybe as my mother nursed him, and poor Mike—weak though he is—is his own foster-brother—if I watched and could get a glimpse of him, he'd spake to me anyhow."

"I wouldn't be under a compliment to him for the lase," replied Burnett proudly. "Maybe, Grace, it's more than himself I'll have one of these days."

"Sure it's no compliment, if we pay the same as

another; and you were never a gale behindhand in your life. And, uncle, honey, if it's trusting to drames you are——"

"You're not going to prache to me, are you?" said the impatient man, interrupting her.

"No, not prache—only there's a look betwixt yon man's two eyes that has no marcy in it. Uncle a-cuishla—take care of him!"

"You're a little fool—a worse natural than Mike—that's what you are."

"But you'll take care—and about the lase?"

"Let me alone, will you? Grace, you're a spiled girl—that's what you are—and it's myself spiled you," replied Burnett, turning again to look out on the night, which, fortunately for him, was worse than ever. It was long past two before the family retired to rest; but Grace's head was too full to sleep. She was up with the lark. A calm and beautiful morning had succeeded the storm. Matthew, her handsome lover, was soon roused from his light slumbers in the barn, and she counselled with him long and earnestly upon her plans.

"The terror of that strange man leaves my heart when the daylight comes," said the innocent girl, "and yet I don't like to leave him alone with Mike and uncle. Mike thinks he'd have pitched uncle into the gravel-pits, Thursday night, but for him. To be sure, there's no minding what Mike says."

Matthew thought differently; he said he had observed that, at times, her brother evinced much intelligence.

"The landlord will be in Ross about eleven, you say; and it's a long walk from this. A weary on the drames! But for the cramer, uncle himself would go, I know;—and yet there's thruth in them at times—and it was wonderful how he knew us all."

Matthew smiled.

"Can't I go myself, and you stay here?" she continued.

No; Matthew would not do that. What, let her go *alone*, as if no one cared for her, to meet her young and handsome landlord!—He didn't care about the lease—not he; but, to suffer her to go alone! If he thought it would make her mind easy, his brother Brien, the stone-mason, should go to work at the New Pier "forenent" the house, and he would be a safeguard.

That was a pleasant proposal; and in her eager desire to obtain a promise from the landlord that he would grant her uncle a lease of years, she more than half persuaded herself that her fears were imaginary. "At all events," she argued, "no harm can nappen him in the bames of the blessed sun. I'll be back before night: and if I do but bring the promise—the written promise from the landlord—uncle will be in a good humour; and then, maybe—maybe—I'd coax him over to give up the drame, and take a fresh oath against the whisky!"

Poor, poor Grace!

She wakened Michael, and telling him to take care of his uncle, promised him some fresh ginger-

bread if he was a good boy and kept his word; and having first left the breakfast ready, set off on her adventure, escorted by as true a lover and as sensible a friend as ever fell to the lot of a country-girl.

Matthew is at this day a perfect jewel in his way—sober, attentive, and industrious; fond of his home, of his wife, and children; worthy to be held up as a pattern to all the married men in his country, whether poor or rich. I honour Matthew, and think him (and that is saying a great deal) as good as any English husband of my acquaintance.

When Black Burnett got up, he was not a little annoyed at finding that pretty Grace had disappeared, contrary to his desire; and though he well knew the cause of her absence, for once he had the prudence to keep his own counsel, saying only to his guest that she had gone to Ross. During the early part of the day, the visitor walked about as he had done before; but at noon the mason saw a strange boy give him a piece of paper—a note or parcel—he could not tell which, it was so "*squeeged*" between their hands; but something of that sort it certainly was.

After dinner, the stranger proposed that he should accompany Black Burnett a little way on the Ross road, to meet Grace on her return; nor did he object to poor Michael bearing them company. The stone-mason (honest Brien) thought, after a little time, he would follow in the distance; though, from the earliness of the hour, and the road being

much frequented, he had no apprehension of anything wrong; keeping, however, his eye on the man he had been cautioned by his brother, and his intended sister, to watch till their return. The two went, to all appearance cheerfully, on their way. The stranger was one who had seen many countries; he could make himself very entertaining, and nobody loved a jest or a good story better than poor Burnett. Michael stopped occasionally to gather blackberries, to speak "to a neighbour's child," to "hurrish" the pigs, or to throw stones at the crows which congregated in the fresh-ploughed fields. The brilliant morning had sobered down into the fine, tranquil autumn day; the broad-leaved colt's-foot (almost as destructive to the cultivator of Irish ground as the superabundant "rag-weed") turned the silver lining of its light green leaves to the declining sunbeams; and the hedges were gaily decked with rich clusters of the red-ripe hawthorn-berry.

"I cannot get on any farther without something to drink," said the stranger, stopping opposite a wayside public-house, which was adorned by the O'Connell arms and a most unlike likeness of the "Agitator." "You have treated me; now I must treat you."

"I have no objection to a glass of '*rale* Cork,'" replied Burnett; "but I must not taste more than one, or Grace, the slut, will haul me over the griddle for it."

"I tell you what: have some of Guinness's

excellent porter ; and if that doesn't warm you, you can have something *short* afterwards."

"Something what ?" inquired his companion, unaccustomed to English slang.

"Strong, you know. Come, my pretty mistress, a quart of Guinness's best."

The clear and healthful beverage frothed as, after he received it, he poured a portion into a measure, and turned towards the fire with the remainder, inquiring of his companion, "Shall I warm it for you ? Would you like it warmed with some sugar and spice, as we do in Wales."

"No, no ; do not put it on the fire. I would rather have it as it is," replied Burnett. "Guinness's stout wants nothing but the drinking."

"You see," said the stranger, turning to the landlady, "*you see he would not let me put anything in it.*"

In an instant the draught was at Burnett's lips ; he had walked far, and the heat and exercise had overpowered him. Another moment, and his destiny on this side of the grave would have been decided ; but his time was not yet come. Michael rushed into the room, and seizing the cup from his uncle's uplifted hand, drank it nearly to the dregs.

"Sorrow catch you for an ill——" But ere Burnett could finish the sentence, his eye rested upon the changed and changing countenance of the stranger. Disappointment, rage, anger, and hatred were painted upon his distorted features—painted so vividly that both the landlady and the intended

victim exclaimed at the same moment, "*It is poisoned!*"

What has taken some time to write was the transaction of less than a minute. The villain seized the measure, and attempted to throw what remained of the contents into the fire; but the arm of a strong serving-maiden prevented his purpose. He then rushed to the door; but here again he was interrupted by the stone-mason, who had quickly followed their steps, and poor Mike, who, with the strong animal instinct of hatred, clung to his legs to impede his progress.

"Fool! idiot! cursed fool!" exclaimed the ruffian, endeavouring to draw the pistol from his vest.

This recalled Burnett to his senses. "My boy! my poor Michael!" he exclaimed. "Lay not a finger near him; for if you do, this hour—this moment—shall be your last!"

"Why do you hold me—what have I done?" inquired the stranger, as his presence of mind returned. "Who talked of poison? If there *was* poison in the beer, *the landlady saw that he would not let ME put anything in it.*"

It happened to be fair-day in one of the neighbouring villages, and a crowd soon collected round and in the house. Amongst them—hurried forward by others, without knowing the cause of the excitement, but accompanied by her lover—came Grace Burnett. On seeing her uncle, she could not resist throwing herself into his arms, and whispering, "I've seen his honour—I've got the

promise, and his honour's own self's coming this way. Run out an' make your *obedience* to him."

"He's a magistrate, thank God!" exclaimed Burnett, rushing to the door. "Grace, for the love o' God, look to Michael!"

"Michael, what ails you, honey?" said the affectionate girl, turning to her brother.

"Nothing, nothing; nothing ails me. They're all foolish—nothing ails Mick—nothing ails Mick," he replied, jumping and tossing his arms.

"Keep asy—keep asy," said the landlord. "Sure the doctor's sent for, and will tell us what to do presently."

When Burnett's landlord left his carriage, and entered the public-house, the look of assurance which the stranger had assumed changed to one of fixed despair—he seemed like one for whom there is no redemption. "What, you, Lawler—you accused of such a crime? Your brother told me you were in Dublin."

"My brother ought to have done his own business himself," growled the fellow; "but no one can say I meant to hurt the boy."

The rest is soon told. A favourite steward had induced Burnett's landlord to promise him that, when the *last life in the lease* dropped, he should have the farm upon which his heart was set. By bribes and entreaties he prevailed upon his brother—a man of wild and reckless habits—to undertake the getting of Burnett out of the way. His first plan was to decoy him from home, and precipitate

him into the gravel-pits: this failed, by the providential interposition of poor Michael, whose idiotcy was so strongly mingled with shrewdness. The villain waited another opportunity, knowing he had a firm hold upon Burnett's superstition and his love of wealth; but that very morning he received intimation from his brother that it must be done quickly, as the landlord himself was talking of passing through and about his farms, and if once the Burnetts "got speech of him," it would be "all up." He at once decided on using poison, and we have seen how it was prevented from taking effect upon his intended victim. Had any evidence been wanting, the remains of arsenic found in a paper on his person; his brother's letter, which the stone-mason had seen him receive; the contents of the beer when analysed by a neighbouring doctor, who unhappily did not arrive until poor Michael had felt that something more than usual "ailed" him—were all proofs of his guilt; but it is impossible to imagine anything more vehement, more terrible than the excitement which prevailed amongst the country-people while the poor idiot was suffering the agonies of death. It was difficult to prevent their tearing the culprit to pieces. The fact of his wanting to take land over another man's head would have been enough to rouse their indignation; but when they saw the simple, inoffensive creature, whose gentle words and good-natured, though witless, offices had endeared him to every cottager, their wrath knew no bounds.

"It's a lesson to the landlord to see after his tenants himself that, I hope, he'll not forget," said one. "Sure the God of heaven, if He lifts the dews from the earth, sends it back again in rain; but everything is took from poor Paddy, and nothing returned!"

"Lift me to the air, Gracy," whispered the dying boy to his sister: "I know I'll be waked soon; but let poor Snap have the butter and gingerbread you promised me, for I never prached my sarmon since, to vex you, Gracy." The hardest and the sternest wept when they saw the poor faithful dog lick his master's purple lips, and saw that master's dying efforts to push from him the thing he certainly loved best in the world, murmuring, "Maybe 'twould hurt him—maybe 'twould hurt him!"

Dread and fearful was the oath of exterminating vengeance which Black Burnett swore against the stranger Lawler and his brother over the body of the dead idiot: but it was not needed—the one paid the forfeit of his crime, and was executed within a month after its committal; the other disappeared, and was never again seen or heard of in the country. Black Burnett abandoned whisky, and grew rich; but never could bear to hear of people finding money under flat stones.

Matthew and Grace inhabit the dwelling still, though it is far more comfortable than it was; and Snap's descendant cannot find a hole in the door-post to poke his nose through, though he is quite as cross and curious as his grandsire.

KELLY THE PIPER

"Judy—Judy Kelly—Judy!—Will ye give us no breakfast to-day—and the sun splitting the trees these two hours?—and the pig itself—the cratur—skreetching alive wid the hunger?"

"Och, it's true for ye, Mick. honey!—true for ye—and the pratees are almost done—and yon's Ellen. She carries the pitcher so lightly that it's little milk she's got from the big house this fine harvest morning."

And Mistress Kelly "hurrisht" the pig out of the cabin, placed three noggins on an old table that she pulled from a dark corner (there was but one window in the room, and that was stuffed with the piper's coat, in lieu of glass), wiped the aforesaid table with the corner of her "praskeen," and, from another corner, lifted the kish, that served to wash, strain, and "dish" the potatoes, feed the pig, or rock the child, as occasion might require.

Judy Kelly was certainly one of the worst specimens of an Irishwoman I had ever the duty of inspecting. She never washed her face except on Sundays; and then it always gave her so bad a cold in her head—on account (to use her own

words) "of the tinderness of her skin"—that she was obliged to cure it with liberal draughts of whisky—the effects of which rendered Judy (at other times a peaceable woman) the veriest scold in Bannow. Poor Kelly always anticipated this storm, and on Sunday evenings mounted his miserable donkey—miscalled Dumpling (a name, however, which might have been appropriate before he took service with his present master), and, with pipes under arm, posted to St. Patrick—the most respectable "she-been shop" on the moor—and finished the night sometimes with a comfortable nap by the roadside or on a sandbank. The most delightful sleep he ever had was one night when Dumpling, being, I suppose, tipsy, like her master, fell, ascending a nice muddy hill, and, unable to rise, remained on her knees until Pat Furlong discovered them both early on Monday morning—Kelly loudly snoring, the glorious sun casting a flood of light over a visage thin, yellow, and ghastly—except a long, pointed, crimson nose, with a peculiar twist at the end, which assumed a richer colouring, shading to the very tip in deep and glowing purple; the bagpipes still tightly grasped under the "professor's" arm.

The family of this village musician was managed like many Irish families—that is, not managed at all; indeed, the habits of the parents precluded even the possibility of the children's improvement in any way. They moved about, a miscellaneous mass of brown-red flesh, white teeth, bushy elf locks, which rarely submitted to the discipline of a comb, and

party-coloured rags; yet were, nevertheless, cheerful, strong, and healthy. Clooney evinced much musical talent, which served as an excuse for idleness, uniform and premeditated. Molly was the best jigger for ten miles round; and Ellen would have been a pretty, roly-poly, industrious gipsy, if she had not been born to the lazy inheritance of the Kelly household: as it was, she did more than all the brats put together; and as her little bare feet puddled through the extraordinary black mud which formed a standing pool around the stately dunghill that graced the door, she was welcomed by her father's salutation, "The top o' the morning to my colleen!—Little to fill the noggins ye've got wid ye. Well, niver mind; clane water's wholesome, and lighter for the stomach, maybe, nor milk; anyway, the pratees are laughing, and I must make haste for once. Where's Molly?"

"She's just stept out to look after her pumps for the pathern; but niver heed, we'll not wait," replied Mrs. Kelly, pouring the potatoes into the kish.

"It's little use, thin, mother, honey, there'll be for pumps, or pipes, or shillalahs, this harvest; for there's black news for the boys and girls, and it's myself was sorry to hear it. There's to be no pathern."

"No pathern!" screamed Mrs. Kelly, letting half the potatoes fall on the floor, to the advantage of the pig, who entered at the lucky moment, and made good use of his time; while Kelly stood with open mouth, ready to receive the one he had

dexterously peeled with his thumb-nail. Poor man, he was petrified: the pattern, where, man and boy, he had played, drank, and quarrelled, in St. Mary's honour, for thirty years; the pattern, with its line of "tints," covered with blankets, quilts, and quilted petticoats, its stalls glittering with gingerbread husbands and wives for half the country; the pattern, where his seat, a whisky barrel, was placed under a noble elm, in the middle of the firm greensward, where the belles and the beaux of the neighbouring hills had footed gaily, if not gracefully, to "Moll Row," "Darby Kelly," or "St. Patrick's Day," until the morning peeped on their revellings, for more than a double century!

"It's impossible, ye little lying hussy!—who dare stop the pathern?—The pathern, is it, in honour of the holy Vargin; for what 'ud they stop it?—There niver was even a bit of a ruction at the pathern o' Bannow, since the world was a world. Ye wicked limb, tell me this moment who tould ye this news?"

Ellen looked at her father, and, knowing it was a word and a blow with him when he was in a passion, meekly replied that Pat Kenessy, the landlord of "St. Patrick," had been turned off the pattern field, when in the act of striking the tent-poles, to be ready for the next day, by Mister Lamb, the Squire's Scotch steward; and that Mister Lamb had informed Kenessy that his master would not permit any pattern to be held on his estate, as it only drew together a parcel of vagabonds, oc-

casioned idleness and quarrels among men and women, and flirtation and courtship among girls and boys; and that a constable was ready to take the first man to Wexford jail who pitched a tent.

Poor Kelly!—at first he would not believe it; but some of the neighbours confirmed the information, and soon a council assembled in his cabin to consider what measures ought to be adopted. The peasantry could not bear to give up quietly the only amusement they enjoyed during the year.

"That's what comes o' the Squire's living so long in England," said Blind Barry. "I thought little good it would end in when he said, t'other day, that my cabin must be whitewashed every six months."

"He threatened to turn my dunghill into the ditch," cried the wrathful piper; "but if he dares to lay his finger on it——"

"Don't fear," said Mickey the tailor, who possessed great reputation, both as a wit and a sage, and who did not enter regularly into the conference, but stood leaning against the door-post—"don't fear. Great men don't like to dirty their fingers with trifles."

"It's long afore his uncle would have done so; but the good ould times is past, and there's no frinds for poor Ireland now," sighed Paddy Lumley, an old, white-headed man, more than eighty years of age.

"It's hard, very hard, though," continued Kelly. "He knows well enough that the trifle I gets at

the pathern, for my bits o' music, is all I have in the wide world to depind on for the rint; and sure it's little I picks up the counthry round to keep the skreeds on the woman and childer—God help thim!—to say nothin' o' the 'atin' and the drinkin'. But niver mind; if there's no pathern, my curse be upon him and his! May the grass, and the nettle, and the——"

"Asy, asy, Kelly!" cried the tailor; "asy, take it asy. Can't ye think—never despair, says I; and so I said to Jim Holloway whin his wife died: never despair, says I. He took my advice, and married agin in three weeks. Why won't one field do ye instead of another? Can't ye borrow another place for the day, man alive?"

'Did ye ever hear such gumshogue!' cried Blind Barry. "Who'd gainsay the Squire, d'ye think? Which of his tinants would say ay to his nay, and have a turn-out, or a double rint, for their punishment?"

"Barry, will ye whisht! Listen to me, Kelly, and we'll have the pathern yet. Clane yerself, and go up to the big house to Mister Herriott. He's an ould residenter, and has a heart to feel for and a hand to relieve the poor man's sorrow. Let him know the rights of it, and I'll go bail he'll lend you some field of his own. And as to the Squire, you know he does not care a brass farthin' for him, on account of the half-acre field they two went to law about—I hear say it cost them, one way or t'other, a clear seven hundred; and the

field itself not worth a trancon. But that's neither here nor there."

"Mick," said Kelly, "you have it!—By the powers, I'll go off straight. To be sure, if we have a pathern, it's little matter where, except that it's pleasure for the girls to dance on the same sod their mothers danced afore them. But niver mind—won't some o' ye come to back me?"

"No occasion in life for that; but we'll go wid ye to the gate, and have the luck when ye come out."

Kelly was soon ready, and set off on the embassy in high spirits. As they journeyed, they talked over the matter more at length, suggested a variety of fields and meadows, and told the story to all they met. The Irish, careless of their time, are ever ready to "tell or hear some new thing"; and Kelly's train became almost a troop before it arrived at the hill which overlooked Mr. Herriott's small but beautiful domain.

It was, indeed, very beautiful: the old mansion, with its tall white chimneys, bursting from a thick grove of many-coloured foliage that, early in August, was deepening into the brown of autumn; the long, straight line of trees that marked the avenue, and the bright blue sea at the distance, reflecting a cloudless sky; the hill, sloping gradually down to the back of the house, which, though not exactly a common, was rendered nearly so by the kindness of its possessor, who gave grass to half the lazy cows and troublesome pigs in the parish.

"We can see the sign of the Welsh coast, the day's so clear," said Mick.

"The dickons drive it back, say I!—the Welsh and English are all foreigners alike; and its o' them all the bother comes," retorted Kelly.

"How dark the mountain of Forth looks! Do you remimber once when it looked bright, Jim?" said Hurling Jack to a tall, powerful man, who strode foremost of the party.

"Do I not! The red-coats were in the hollow, and the boys on the hill: they covered it like a swarm o' bees. Och! if we had but attacked thim as I wanted, not a mother's son would have lived to tell the story; but they got to the whisky and the pipes, and the reinforcement came up, and it was all over. Kelly, I remimber you were blind with the drink, and yet ye kept on playing for the dear life—

'We'll down wid the orange, and up wid the green;
Success to the croppies wherever they're seen!'"

"Whisht, Jim, whisht!" cried Kelly, looking about quite frightened; "how do you know who's listening?—and, as I'm a sinner, yon's the master down in the glin, looking as mild as new milk."

"How can ye tell how he looks, and his back to ye, ye nataral?" slyly inquired the tailor. "But I'm sorry he is there, for I thought we might have taken the short cut through the round meadow."

"We may do that still," replied Kelly, "for his honour's too much the gintleman to look back

IRISH MERRYMAKING

From a Painting by

ERSKINE NICOL, R.S.A.



whin once on the road: and there's others know that as well as me, I'm thinking; for I see Biddy Colfer turning her two-year-ould calf in through the gap. Well, that bates all—and she only a Kerry woman!"

Kelly and his friends were, in some measure, disappointed. They certainly took the short cut, and his honour did not look back, but he did as bad: he seated himself deliberately on the wheel of a car that was turned upside down in the ditch-side, and answered all the purposes of gate and turnstile; whistled two rambling spaniels to his side, to share the caresses so liberally bestowed on Neptune, a huge Newfoundland dog, who disdained frolic and fun of all description, and looked up in Mr. Herriott's face with an owl-like gravity that made it doubtful whether his steadiness proceeded from sagacity or stupidity. As the crowd advanced, he drew still closer to his master's side, and in low, sullen growls expressed much displeasure at so ill-dressed a troop approaching the avenue.

"We are in for it," whispered Kelly, in a low voice, "so we may as well put a bould face on it at once, and spake altogether."

In another moment Mr. Herriott was surrounded by the bareheaded company; Kelly and Mickey the tailor a little in advance.

"Every blessing in life on yer honour!—and proud are we all to see yer honour looking so fresh and bravely this fine morning."

"Kelly, is it you?—and Mick?—and—why, what earthly business brings such a gang of you here? Have I not warned you, over and over again, not to make your confounded paths across the clover field?—And I see half the barley is destroyed before the sickle can be put to it, from your everlasting trespasses."

"Is it? Oh, then, more's the pity, to say nothin' o' the shame!" exclaimed the piper, looking very sorrowful. "But we had no intintion in life to trespass; only we saw yer honour from the top o' the hill, and as we had a little business wid yer honour, to save time, and not to trouble ye at the house, we thought it best to take to the path. We've not done a taste of harm, yer honour."

"Well, Kelly, do not do so again; it sets a bad example, and destroys the fields. (Neptune, down, sir!) But what's your business?—Another disagreement with your worthy lady?—or a quarrel?—or a——"

"Nothin' at all at all of that sort, sir; it's far worse nor that, yer honour, long life to ye! It's all o' the pathern. A burning sin, and a shame, and a disgrace to the whole town and counthry: the likes of it was niver heard since the world was born!"

"Is that the way to discoorse a gintleman?" interrupted Mick. "How can his honour understand ye?—ye're for all the world like a born nataral," and he pushed the diminished piper back, and, advancing one foot forward, commenced his oration, at the same time rubbing the brim of his hat with much

dexterity: "To-morrow, as is well known to yer honour, being a raale scholar, and a born gintleman, —not like some neighbours, who have a power o' money and nothing else,—will be" (crossing himself) "the blessed day of our Lady, and always the pathern day of the parishes of Kilkaven and Bannow. Now yer honour minds the little square field at the foot o' the hill—always, in the memory o' man, called the pathern field. Well, it has plased t'other Squire —not that I'd iver think of turning my tongue against the gentry, the raale gentry, yer honour" (bowing low to Mr. Herriott)—"he has thought fit to forbid the pathern, and to threaten to sind the first man caught pitching a tint-pole on his land by a constable to Wexford jail."

Mr. Herriott possessed a kind and benevolent temper; he loved to see the peasantry happy in their own way, and spent his fortune on his estate, anxious, both by precept and example, to instruct and serve his tenantry; but he had a decided, old-fashioned, Irish hatred of jails, constables, lawyers, soldiers, etc.; and often did he glory in the fact that neither soldier, constable, lawyer, physician, nor water-guard were within twelve miles of his mansion. "The rich Squire," as he was called, was a very good man as times went, but so fond of carrying everything with a high hand that the benefits he conferred on the poor (and they were many) were seldom received with gratitude, because he made little allowance for the customs or foibles of those among whom he dwelt. Moreover, he loved

soldiers, talked of establishing a land and water guard, and a dispensary, in the parish: all good things, but yet decidedly opposed to the views of his more gentle and amiable neighbour.

"Indeed, a constable!"

"Ay, yer honour, to a peaceable parish."

"You have been, and are, a peaceable set of men, considering you are Irish," added Mr. Herriott, smiling; "and certainly I believe no one here had anything to do with that unfortunate riot at Duncormuck, where poor Murtough was killed."

"No, no, yer honour," they loudly and unitedly replied; one, in a low voice, added, "He was only a Connaught man after all!"

"I should be sorry, indeed, if the Bannow boys wanted either soldiers or constables to keep them in order; but I do not see how I can interfere. I cannot oblige Mr. Desmond to lend you the field."

"No; but yer honour could give us the loan of one of yer own to keep our pathern in—and long may yer honour reign over us."

"Amin!" said Kelly.

"One of my own? I do not think I could do that," replied Mr. Herriott. "The fields that join the road are surrounded by a bounds-ditch and young plantations; and as to those in the centre of the domain—impossible, quite."

"No harm would happen to the trees," replied Kelly, "but it would be very inconvenient, no doubt. So I was jist thinking, if yer honour would have no objection, the place forenent the grate gate would

be quite the thing; and I'll go bail that they'll all walk as if 'twas on eggs they were threading, and neither gate nor green will resave the laste damage in life."

"Very well," said Mr. Herriott; "remember you are security for the good conduct of your friends."

"Oh, every blissing attind yer honour, and the mistress, and all the good family!—Hurrah, boys! we've gained the day," cried the triumphant piper, capering about and snapping his fingers. "We'll jig it, and peaceably too; no quieter lads in the counthry. If that ould scoundrel, Tim M'Shane, and his fiddle comes within a mile o' me, by the powers I'll——"

"Stop, stop, my good fellow," said Mr. Herriott, "peace; no disturbance. The slightest fray, and, depend upon it, I will set my face against fairs and patterns for the next ten years."

"Oh, God bless yer honour! I'll take an oath against fighting and whisky, if yer honour wishes, with heart's delight."

"Never mind: if you swore against it in one parish, you would take it in another; that would be pretty much the same thing, I fancy. There, go the road way, and now no more talk this morning," continued the kind man, as he rose from his seat. "I will walk up with the ladies, and see that you are all quiet and steady, to-morrow evening."

"Long lifes," "powers o' blessings," "stores o' good luck" were bestowed upon "him and his," and the parties pursued their separate paths.

"The grate gate" terminated the long straight avenue before mentioned, where, sheltered by some five or six noble beech and horse-chestnut trees, and peeping from amidst a profusion of sweet-brier and wild roses, stood a little lodge, meek and lowly as a hedge primrose, with two lattice windows and a slated roof—that unusual covering of Irish houses.

The interior of this pretty cot was more interesting even than its outward seeming. Within, sat an old female spinning, her white hair turned up in front, a clean kerchief pinned over her cap and knotted under her chin, and a short red cloak, fastened by a broad black riband: her face was thickly wrinkled, perhaps by age, perhaps by sorrow. When erect, her figure must have been tall and imposing; and long, bony fingers and sinewy arms told of strength and exertion. At her feet was sitting, on what the Irish peasantry call a "boss," a very slight girl, with a quantity of light hair, shading a face of almost unearthly paleness: she was carding flax, and laying it, in flakes, on a clean table at her side. The maiden, as she conversed with the aged crone, raised her large blue eyes to her withered face, and gazed on it with as much affection as if it possessed the most fascinating beauty; while the woman's harsh voice softened when she spoke to a being evidently so dear to the best feelings of her heart.

"Oh, blessed be the day, or rather the night whin I saw ye first, mavourneen!—for you are the

blessin' o' my life, and what was sorrow to you was joy to me."

"Joy to me, nurse, not sorrow; for if I lost one parent, I found another in you."

"A poor parent, my darlint May, but a fond. However, God's will be done: ould Nelly Clarey's heart is not could yet."

Old Nelly Clarey, in her early days, had been a bathing-woman, and, accustomed to the sea from infancy, had become almost amphibious. Her fearless disposition induced the ladies who visited the beautiful banks of Bannow in summer to rely solely on her guidance; and, moreover, she could row a boat as well as any man in the country. There are a pair of green islands, about three miles from the borough of Ballytigue, called the "Keeroes," where, in summer, a few starved sheep, or one or two goats, wander over about an acre of moss and weeds. In spring-tides and stormy weather these rocks are very dangerous to vessels whose pilots are not fully acquainted with the channel; and a winter seldom passed without some shipwreck occurring either on or near them. A dark squally morning succeeded a fearful night of storm, about fifteen years before the period of my story. The hovel Nelly then lived in was so near the beach that even the rippling of the summer surge cheered the loneliness of her dwelling; but, on the occasion to which I refer, it was not the "soft music of the waters" that roused her from her bed, but the often-repeated boom, sound-

ing above the tempest, which she well knew to be the minute-gun of distress from some perishing vessel.

The early dawn beheld her wandering among rocks accessible only to the sea-birds and herself. She clambered the highest point, and extended her gaze over the ocean, which still angrily chafed and growled along the shore. Beyond the breakers the surface was somewhat smooth; but little was seen to mark where the islands rested, save the white and sparkling foam, dashing and glittering in the early light, finely contrasted with the deep colouring of the sky and water. Nelly still gazed, and now shaded her eyes with her hand; for she thought she discovered something like a motionless mast amongst the distant breakers. She was confirmed in this opinion by observing several floating spars and casks rapidly borne towards the mainland. On descending to the beach, she found many of the neighbours anxiously watching the approach of what they considered lawful plunder.

"The wreck is between the Keeroes, Jack," said Nelly to a rough, shaggy-looking man, who, half in and half out of the water, was straining every nerve to haul in a cask in danger of dashing against a huge dark mass of rock that jutted into the sea.

"And what's it to you or me, ould girl?—'T would be fitter for you to be in your bed than down on the wild shore, with yer whity brown hair streaming about yer shoulders. Ye look for all the world like a witch!"

"It's you, and the likes of you," she replied, "that

bring disgrace upon poor Ireland. Phil Doran's boat has passed through breakers worse nor these, and it shall go out, or I'll know the reason why; and so many poor strangers, maybe, dying at this blessed moment on thim islands!"

"It's few 'll go wid ye, then," replied the man, as he grappled with the cask; and, pulling it in, added, "If it's strangers ye're thinking of, there's one come already," pointing to a heap of seaweed—"his bed is soft enough, at any rate. The ould fool," he continued, as Nelly strided towards the spot, "she'll take more trouble about that senseless corpse than she would to look after the bits o' godsinds the wild waters bring us."

Nelly found the body of a youth, apparently about eighteen, nearly embedded in seaweed. She disentangled it with speed and tenderness, carried it up the cliffs, dripping as it was, with perfect ease, and laid it out before the turf fire in her humble hut. One of the arms was broken and sorely mangled; and the bitten lip and extended eyelids plainly told that the youth had wrestled daringly with death.

"Ye'll no more gladden your mother's heart, or bring joy to your father's home," sighed the excellent creature, when perfectly convinced that restoratives were useless. "God comfort the mother that bore ye!—for ye were brave and handsome, and maybe the pride o' more hearts than one."

As the morning advanced, tokens of extensive shipwreck crowded the beach, and many respect-

able inhabitants assembled, to prevent plunder. The surf still ran so high that Nelly's pleadings were disregarded. Although the mast of the lost vessel was now distinctly seen, the hardiest boatman would not venture out to the Keeroes.

"I cannot call ye Irishmen," said she, after using many fruitless arguments to urge her neighbours to attempt the passage; "vile Cromellians are ye all, wid not a drop of true Milesian blood in yer shrivelled veins!"

The evening sun had cast a deep red light over the ocean, whose waters were less disturbed than they had been at noon; and the moon rose, with calm majesty, over the subsiding waves—attended by her train of silent but sparkling handmaids, scattering light and brilliancy over her path.

Nelly could not sleep! Again she clambered on the "black rock," and scared the sea-gull from its nest—anxious to ascertain, although it was almost impossible, if any living object remained on the Keeroes, now more distinctly visible. As her eye wandered along the shore, it rested on Phil Doran's boat, which had been drawn up on the shingles. Her mind was at once made up to a daring enterprise. No village clock tolled the knell of the departing hours, but she knew it must be near midnight. She returned to her cabin, wrapt a long cloak around her, and secured a bottle of spirits in the hood. A few minutes found her on the strand: the oars were in the strong but rude fishing-boat, and she soon drew it to the water. When in the

act of pushing off, a head appeared from behind one of the rocks, and a voice exclaimed, "Botheration to ye, on what fool's journey are ye now? It's myself believes ye've doings with the Ould One, for there's no rest for a body near ye, day nor night."

"Come, Jack," replied the woman, convinced that assistance would be useful; "it's calm enough now, and ye may find something on thim islands you'd like to have. I cannot rest in pace while I think there may be a living thing on the rocks."

The love of plunder and the love of enterprise—the latter, perhaps, inspired by the whisky he had drank during the day—urged Jack to accompany the woman. As they approached the Keeroes, their little bark leaped lightly over the billows, and Nelly, like others of her sex, gloried in her opinion being correct; for the mast and part of the rigging of the vessel still adhered to the wreck, and absolutely hung over the largest island.

Jack commenced prowling for plunder; Nelly could not perceive a single body on the shore. At length she discovered, midway the mast, something like a female figure, so securely fastened that even the waters must fail to disentangle the cords and scarfs with which the hands of affection had secured it to what appeared the last refuge.

"It's a faymale, at all events," said Jack, when Nelly succeeded in fixing his attention; "I'm sartin it's a faymale; so here goes!—Bad as ye think me—bad as maybe I am—Jack Connor never did a bad turn to the women."

He managed to get to the mast, cut the braces, and lower the corpse (for so it was), still enveloped in many shawls, into Nelly's arms.

"She's gone, as well as the boy ye picked up this morning, Nelly," he exclaimed.

"God in His mercy save us all!" she exclaimed, falling on her knees, "God in His mercy save us! Her stiff arms are locked over a living baby, and its little head is on her bare bosom!"

It was even so. The lady was dead; her weak frame had been unable to retain life amid so many horrors, and her spirit could not long have lingered behind his, whose last efforts were exerted to preserve the objects of his purest affections, when to others "all earth was but one thought—and that was—death!"

Jack—croppy, smuggler, wrecker, poacher, white-boy, rogue, and rapparee, as he either was or had been—Jack Connor (I wish to do everybody justice) placed the unfortunate lady carefully in the boat, took off his jacket, which he added as another covering to the still living infant, and, without plundering a single article or uttering a single sentence, rowed steadily to the shore. As he carried the body up the cliffs, the morning light was stealing over the now calm ocean. "Nelly," said he, as he rested the burden on her bed, "Nelly, I'll never gainsay ye agin: if I'd done yer bidding yesterday, that crathur would be a living woman now."

Nelly's courage and humanity gained for her

high approbation. The vessel was ascertained to have been a Chinese trader, on her homeward passage; but of the crew or passengers none remained except the infant the bathing-woman had so heroically rescued.

Mr. Herriott persuaded Nelly, for the sake of her adopted child, to take up her abode at the avenue lodge. The babe was called May, and much did Nelly complain of what she termed a "heathen name." But Mr. Herriott convinced her it was right, as the letters M. A. Y. were wrought in a bracelet found on her mother's wrist. No inquiries had ever been made about the little stranger, and her story was seldom thought of; but she was very different from the peasant children—not so fond of play, and always sweetly serious. She heard the intelligence that the pattern was to be celebrated outside the great gates with more fear than pleasure, and could hardly understand why Miss Kelly so gloried in her father's having gained the day. Old Nelly "stood up" for Mr. Herriott's ascendancy with true clan-like feeling—not that she cared for the pattern, but she hated soldiers, and constables, and lawyers, and water-guards, because she knew "the master" hated them; and so, in honour of the pattern victory, she told May that she should cut as good a figure as any of them—and better too, for the matter of that. There was a long, narrow scarf, that had belonged to her mother (heaven rest her soul!), and she should wear it as a sash, and [she should dance too—

"I do not care for dancing, dear nurse," observed the pale girl; "my heart's not in it: but I'll do my best to please you; and I dare say it will be a merry pathern."

And so it was. Such a pattern!—such a sight of tents had never been seen by the oldest man in the parish, except at the fair of Ballynasloe, which, as Kelly said, he had never seen, but only heard of! Such a "power" of people! There was the old Lord of Carrick, as he was called—the most respectable butcher for ten miles round, with his bob-wig over his grey hair, all on one side, from joy and whisky. There was Mickey the tailor, with his seven sons: such fine boys, not one of them under six feet, and the youngest only one-and-twenty. There was Pat Kenessy's tent, with a green flag flowing without and whisky "gilloure" flowing within. There was Mary-the-Mant, in a "bran-new gown"; and the five Misses Kenessy, with every earthly and heavenly colour on them, except orange. Then the Corishes—the never-ending Corishes!—Pat Corish and his childer; Jim Corish and his childer; Tom Corish and his childer; Mat Corish and his childer—not a quiet English family of three or four young ones each, but ten or fourteen romping rogues, boys and girls, with stentorian lungs and herculean fists. And who would be cruel enough to interrupt their amusements, of hurling, jumping, eating, drinking, dancing, and fighting, in pattern time—while their parents were employed, generally speaking, pretty much in the same way?

"The grate tint" was reserved for dancing, when the "quality" came: and often did Kelly parade around it, to see that all was right; and many a longing look was cast down the avenue, to watch if the gentry were approaching.

"The great bell did not ring for dinner as early as usual," said Nelly Clarey to her adopted, as she placed the last pin in her sash and arranged the flapping bows to her own peculiar taste. "I don't want you to go amongst them yet, till the quality come; but stay," she continued, "let me try," and she opened a little box, that contained a chain, three rings, and a small but curiously wrought bracelet—"stay: these were your poor mother's, and beautiful she looked, and quiet, when I took them off, and swore to keep them for you, my darlint, and niver to let poverty part them from me. But it's little poverty I've known, thank God; and blessings on him and his that preserved us from it." During this speech, Nelly had tried first one, then the other, of the rings on May's fingers. "They're all too small for ye: well, sure enough, *she* had the sweetest little hand I ever saw. The fastening of the chain's not good, or ye might wear that; but what's to hinder ye putting on the bracelet?—ye cannot lose it. M. A. Y.—it was yer father's and mother's hair that formed them letters, I'll ingage." May gazed upon it, and tear-drops gathered on her long eyelashes.

"My child, almost my own child," said the affectionate Nelly, "why do ye cry?—You are always sad when others are merry. Ah, May

May ; you'd forget—look !—there's Mr. Herriott, and the mistress, and the young lady, and the strange dark gentleman—master's ould friend, they say—at the gate, and you not fit to be seen. There—stand asy, and wash your eyes. I'll attind their honours ; and in five minutes ye'll look my queen agin."

Kelly and some of his train stood outside the gate ready to receive "the gintry," and way was soon made for them to pass along the line of tents. The bustling and skirmishing instantly ceased. The men held their hats in their hands, and the women rose and courtesied respectfully, as Mr. Herriott and his family proceeded, while many a heartfelt blessing followed their footsteps.

Perhaps the most perfect happiness in the world is that which a good Irish landlord enjoys when his tenantry are really devoted to his service ; because their devotion is manifested by those external signs which can only emanate from an enthusiastic temperament. "How well his honour looks !—sure it's a blessing to see him ; and the mistress so queen-like, and yet so humble, with her kind smile, and asking after the childer, so motherly."

"Who's the stranger ?"

"From foreign parts, I b'lieve, by his dark skin."

"Very like : in all yer born days, did ye ever see anything like the state Kelly takes on himself ? To be sure he's o' very dacent people, and the best piper in the whole barony ; but there's rason in all things, and there'll be a power of gintry in the

PRATIES AND POINT

From a Painting by
ERSKINE NICOL, R.S.A.



pathern before night. Mr. Co'nack and the ladies, Mr. Jocelyn, and Mr. Lambton, and maybe they won't put up wid Kelly's talk, like the rest."

"Never heed; sure, they a'll know his ways. But come," and the oldest crone of the assembly rose off a seat, where four or five, "withered and wild in their attire," had been sitting smoking their "du-deens," and making observations on everybody, under the shadow of one of the great trees. "Come, they're crowding into the tint, and we'll be all behind, like the cow's tail, if we don't make haste."

Kelly had taken his seat, or, rather, erected his throne, on the top of one of the largest casks that could be procured in the parish; and on forms, at each side of the musician, were seated the "gentle-folk"—a small space between; and men, women, and children crouched or stood, as they best could manage, leaving sufficient room for the dancers—for which purpose, certainly, not much was required, as either reel or jig can be performed on a good-sized door, always taken c " its hinges, and laid on "the sod" for the purpose.

The wide entrance to the tent was crowded with a mass of laughing Irish faces beaming with joy.

Paddy Madder—who but Paddy Madder was fit to open the ball? Paddy, the oldest man in the parish, and, in his youth, it was said (for none remembered it), the finest dancer ever seen in all Ireland. Paddy acquitted himself nobly, considering that he had numbered eighty-and-two years; and Mr. Herriott placed the old man by his side,

and heard with delight of the youthful feats which age so dearly loves to dwell upon.

Miss Kelly next dropped her bob courtesy to young Tom Corish; who, after "covering the buckle" to admiration, and beating his partner at the "highland fling," made "a remarkable genteel bow" to poor May, heedless of the smiles and approbation pert Jane Roche bestowed on his performance. May was not at all flattered by the distinction, and clung to her nurse's side, until desired, in an authoritative tone, by Kelly, to "step out, and not look so sheepish." May danced, I must confess, very badly, but she looked very lovely: timidity and exercise gave a colour to her cheek which it seldom possessed, and her light, sylph-like form, graced by the flowing sash, formed a strange contrast to the almost gigantic figure of her partner.

"Who is that girl?" inquired the strange gentleman of Mr. Herriott.

"I cannot tell you who she is, but she has been nursed by a very deserving woman, who attends our gate lodge."

"Indeed."

The gentleman again looked at her. As May continued, she forgot she was the object of general attention, and danced with more spirit. The stranger rose from his seat, and appeared to watch her movements with extraordinary anxiety.

"It is strange," said he to Mr. Herriott, "but that child is singularly like one whom I loved more than any earthly being—my sister Anna."

"Indeed! I never saw her—but you often mentioned her to me when we were schoolfellows. Do you remember saying how much you should like me for a brother-in-law?"

"Boyhood's imaginings, my dear friend. She returned to her family at Calcutta, when her education was completed, and married a young merchant, her inferior in rank—but I knew she was happy, and forgave it, poor Anna! She accompanied him to China, and, if their traffic succeeded, they were to have voyaged to England. I found they embarked on board a vessel for the purpose, but——"

"Shame upon ye!" exclaimed Tom Corish, loud enough to interrupt the narrative Mr. Herriott was so earnestly attending to; "ye know his honour does not dance, May, but it's only manners for ye to ax his honour's frind to take a step, now that you've bate me clane off, lazy as you wint about it."

Poor May made her courtesy, all panting and blushing as she was, and, without saying a word, or looking up, extended her hand to lead him to "the floor"; but she uttered a piercing shriek when, seizing her arm with a powerful grasp, the stranger half dragged, half carried her to the entrance of the tent. There he tenderly supported the frightened girl, but still held the arm she had extended to him with unrelaxing firmness; while his eyes wandered from her face to the golden bracelet which her nurse had clasped. The peasantry were perfectly

unable to comprehend the matter. Kelly descended from his throne; and Nelly Clarey looked quite thunderstruck. She was, however, the first to recover her surprise.

"What do you mean by glowering that way on my child?"

"*Your* child, woman! Herriott, you said she was not hers; you said you could not say who she was. Speak, I entreat, for mercy speak, and tell me how that bracelet came—who gave it her?"

"Nobody gave it her," replied Nelly, "I myself took it off her mother's arm—God rest her soul!—the very morning that Jack Connor and I picked thim both out of the salt shrouds. The waves were her early cradle, poor thing!"

"How long since?"

"Oh, for the matter o' that, it will be fifteen years, come next Candlemas."

The strange gentleman let the braceleted wrist drop, and folded the trembling May to his bosom.

"She is my sister's child," said he, when he could speak, "and henceforth mine."

Mr. Herriott suggested the propriety of their going into the lodge. Poor Nelly followed the gentry, keeping close to her adopted, muttering, "I have lost her now, anyhow." The rings and the chains were produced; but the strongest witness was the bracelet. M. A. Y. were the united initials of May's father and mother; and a spring, under the clasp, which had escaped observation, discovered a miniature of Mr. Monnett (the strange gentleman)

which he had himself given to his beloved sister as a token of affection on her leaving Calcutta.

"So ye're a lady after all, by fortune as well as birth," said Nelly, looking affectionately at May, "and I must call ye Miss. And ye'll be no more near me; and no more shall I hear yer sweet voice in the soft summer evenings, calling to me from the wood, or reading to me whin the snow hangs the trees with white, like cherry blossoms; and the place will miss ye; and I shall be left desolate in my old age. But ye'll think of me—think of yer poor nurse, Nelly, who, on her bare knees"—and as she knelt she extended her clasped hands to heaven—"prays that the tears o' sorrow may niver dim yer eye; that the blush o' shame may niver paint yer cheek; that the blessings of the poor may strew the sweetest summer flowers in yer path; and that a long life and a happy death may be yer blessing; and after," continued she solemnly, "in heaven—in the presence of the Father and His holy saints—may the poor Bannow woman see ye a bright angel of glory!"

May flung herself on her nurse's bosom; and Mr. Monnett assured them he hoped they would never separate: "For I think, Nelly," said he, "May looks so delicate that she will need your kind care wherever she goes; and she would be unworthy of my affection if she wished to leave you." Consequently, there was not a single sorrowful heart among the population, rich and poor, of "the united parishes of Bannow and Kilkaven."

"Anybody might see," exclaimed Kelly, half an hour afterwards, when May appeared at the gate, for a moment, to receive the congratulations of her former companions, leaning on the one side on her uncle, and on the other on her nurse—"anybody might see that she had always the jintle drop in her; and I tould you so, Miss Jinny, my lady," continued he, sneeringly, to Jane Roche, who had always treated poor May with contempt, and looked somewhat disconcerted at her sudden elevation. "Fine feathers don't always make fine birds." Miss Jenny, however, had one consolation: hereafter, a powerful rival would be removed out of the way.

"Kelly," said Mr. Herriott, "but for you this discovery would not have been made; for there would have been no pattern. Therefore, my boys, crown him king of pipers, patterns, and whisky; and plenty of that, and good Irish roast beef, shall you have, and a glorious supper outside these gates: peace, plenty, and whisky!"

"King Kelly for ever, and long life to the May!" cried Mickey the tailor; and they chaired, or rather shouldered, Kelly round the green, and poured a noggin of pure whisky over his head, which made him as good a king as the best of them (they said); and the Piper composed a jig, extempore, that beat jig Polthouge, and all the jigs ever made before or since, clean out of the field, and called it the "Lady May."

ILLUSTRATIONS OF IRISH PRIDE

It is lucky for me that I was not born of the sex which is acknowledged as pre-eminent in the creation. Had I been one of the dignitaries of human nature, I should not have *dared* to hazard an opinion upon Irish pride, unless, indeed, I was tired of existence, and willing to submit myself to the laws of honour: so that my life might be "satisfactorily" disposed of—a sacrifice to appease the exceeding wrath which the bare mention of such a subject is likely to excite amongst my countrymen. I have angered them a little, now and then, by telling simple truths, without reference to *party*, which, I am happy to have an opportunity of repeating, I totally disclaim. An Irishman will forgive you for reasoning with him, provided it is not after dinner; but I doubt if his philosophy will extend so far as to forgive even a lady for *laughing* at him. When I call to mind the difficulties and absurdities into which pride has drawn my countryfolk, I do not know whether I ought not to weep instead of laugh. The tear and the smile, as regards Ireland, seem really twin-born: the one invariably accompanies the other. Like

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its native music, the feeling it excites is of mingled joy and gloom—

“Erin ! the smile and the tear in thine eye,
Blend like the rainbow that hangs in the sky.”

Pride has always appeared to me to flow through Irish veins (without any reference to the situation of the individual) as naturally as the blood itself. In England there are distinctions in pride—the aristocracy are proud of their birth, the citizens of their wealth, the artisans of their trade. But in Ireland pride has but one boast, commencing with “illustrious descent,” and ending in “dacent people.” Honesty, sobriety, industry, independence are all as dust in the balance in comparison with this destructive pride ; and a “born gentleman,” though the youngest son of a youngest son, without a single *son*, even now, would blush at connecting himself with commerce.

I remember being greatly amused by a country glover once saying to me, in reply to a compliment conferred upon his skilful workmanship, while national energy danced merrily in his eyes, “It isn’t the sewing with which I stitches together the skins of the poor dumb bastes that I prides myself on. No, no ; I’ve something. God be praised ! *better nor that to look up to*, poor as I am : the blood of the O’Neils goes fair and softly through every vein in my body.”

“Indeed !” I replied. “Then how came you to be a glover ?”

“Why, you see, ma’am, misfortunes’ll come upon

the best of us. My father (God be good to him!) wouldn't *demane* himself with trade, but died dacent: for though he had nothing to live upon, he left enough to bury him, and what's more, he left me *a copy of the coat of arms* of the O'Niels, which James Mulvany painted for him long ever ago, *on the back of his own door*. And when my mother (she was fro' the north) put it to me how her father's brother would give me a trade, why, I looked, you know, to the credit of *my people*, and tould her 'No.' 'And then?' says she (she was a knowing woman), 'hould up your head, my boy,' she says; 'what would hinder you from taking up with the sign of your family for a trade'—and she turned round the room door, and sure enough there were two lions painted, *forenent* each other—a fish at the bottom, and above the fish an open glove. 'The fish, if it has any sense in it,' says she, 'means fishermen—and the glove, what can it mean? Sure, if there wasn't glovers, there'd be no gloves.' 'My uncle's a glover, Ben,' says she, 'and a glove's the sign of the family; so be a glover, like a good boy; and believe your mother when she tells you that to take their sign for a business can't be no disgrace: sure it's the only trade in the world I'd wish to see you turn to.' So you mind, ma'am, it's on account of *my family* I'm pleased, not on account of the praise the ladies (God bless 'em) gives to the gloves.'

Poor Ben! His mother, I suspect, had the sense of the family. Perhaps all my English readers do not know that the north of Ireland is a trading,

and consequently a prosperous, part of the country; but it is curious to observe the contempt with which the inhabitants of the other districts generally treat their commercial neighbours. How ridiculous it would appear to us in England to hear a tradesman expatiating on his connection with the aristocracy, in any other way than in the way of business!

If this pride of family elevated the minds of its possessors; if it led them to that sort of exertion which produces independence; if it made them incapable of a careless or dishonest action—then perhaps I would call it a pardonable failing—a weakness, which ought to be forgiven for the fruit's sake. The pride of ancestry may deserve to be considered a noble pride when it stimulates to exertion and animates to virtue. But unhappily, in Ireland it rises trumpet-tongued against every species of employment derogatory to the memories of the O'Connors, O'Rourkes, MacMurrags, MacCarthys, O'Briens, or O'Tooles—nay, persons who have no earthly connection with those illustrious departed make for themselves a spurious *dacency*, as they call it, which is provoking from its very absurdity.

A friend of mine had some time ago an English housemaid and an Irish cook, both young women. The English girl was the very model of what an English servant ought to be: neat, cheerful, orderly, clean, good-tempered, thoughtful, and attentive. It was pleasant to meet her on the stairs with her snowy

duster, her broad sweeping-brush that looked as new as if it had never disturbed a spider; her bright tin dust-pan, her fair shining hair, braided across her forehead to hide the curl-papers which were destined to confine her tresses till the evening, her sliding curtsey as she poised herself on one foot that you might pass with ease, the graceful manner in which she balanced her brush and held her dust-pan, her sweet smile that seemed to say, "What can I do to please you, lady?" were delightful; and yet she looked so in keeping with her occupation that in nothing would her mistress have had Lucy Bramer altered.

Betsey French was most amusingly her opposite. Lucy was pretty and petite; Betsey was handsome, and of Patagonian proportions. Lucy's voice was soft and stealing; Betsey's tones were broad and shrill. Lucy's hair was golden—not red, but golden; Betsey's was 'black as the raven's wing. Betsey's mirth was boisterous; she was in and out of a passion at least ten times a day; her attentions bordered upon freedom; she had abundant talents, but no tact; she was a superior cook, yet her dinners never seemed well set upon the dishes—the joints were invariably put the wrong way, and the gravies, soups, and jellies overflowing. No two servants could be more different, although they were attached to each other. Lucy was as neat in her person in the morning as in the afternoon; but Betsey's shoes were down at heel, her kerchief off one shoulder and dragged on the other, and her apron stringless, until past six: then, indeed, she made her appear-

ance like a full-blown peony—red ribands in her cap, and a bright green gown, with sundry flounces garnishing the skirt.

I never could make out exactly how it was, but pretty Lucy Bramer—the modest, down-eyed Lucy—had a lover—an absolute lover of flesh and blood—a living lover, in the person of a handsome coachman, who had evidently won Lucy's heart by a flourish of his whip, and rode post through it after paying as toll the affections of his own. The wedding-day was fixed. Lucy was sitting at the long kitchen table, cutting and snipping a certain quantity of white satin ribbon, when Betsey, who had been polishing the *outside* of a tin kettle (the generality of Irish servants—ay, and many English ones too—do not trouble themselves about the *inside*), said, "Why then, Lucy, honey, is the *licence* bought yet?"

"The what?" in her turn inquired Lucy.

"The *licence*, to be sure," repeated Betsey.

"Why, Betsey, you do not suppose Edmund is going to be such a fool as to throw away his money on a *licence*? Of course we shall be married by banns—we have been out-asked twice."

Betsey laid the bit of black leather on one side, and the bit of what she called "whitening" on the other side of the tin kettle, and clapping her hands together, "to bang the dirt out of them," looked steadily in Mary's face.

"Didn't you tell me that both Edmund and yourself had saved a big trifle of money, enough to

furnish two rooms and keep you *from eating herrings' tails* for many a day?"

"Yes," replied Lucy; "but what has that to do with the licence?"

"And a dacent girl like yourself tells me you're not to have a licence?"

"To be sure—do you not think we shall find other employment for our money?"

"And you mean *that* one wedding to last you your life?"

"Please God!" replied the pretty housemaid.

"Yet you'll have no licence, but be married by beggarly banns! Well, the back of my hand to you, England, afther that!—a dacent girl like Lucy Bramer to put up with banns! Well, afther that! Sure it's wonderful you don't seek out a couple-beggar, and get married like the heathens in the time of Nebecudnazar! No licence! and enough money stowed by, in the savings-bank, to furnish two rooms!—And to put up with banns! as if you hadn't a teaster" (sixpence) "nor a groat in the world! Well, thank God, I've a pride above that. If I was going to be married, every rag of clothes I have should go, or I'd be married dacent!"

"That would not be the way to be decently married," said Lucy quietly, "to have no clothes to be married in."

"Oh, the meanness of them English," persisted Betsey, "to think that even for onct in their lives the spirit can't get into them!—the tame negurs! O Lucy! and to think about furnishing! Why, in

Ireland we give all honour and glory to the wedding and the priest, and think as it is but to be done onct, it ought to be done dacent. Oh, *what signifies the hardship afther*, if you have showed *that the good drop stops with the family!*"

Lucy looked perplexed.

"If you show that it isn't the money you care for," persisted Betsey—

"But I *do* care for the money," replied the expectant bride; "I worked hard for it, and I assure you, Betsey, I have as great a desire to be 'decent' as you—only I think our ideas of what decency is differ. Who knows when I go in or come out of church whether I have been married by banns or licence?—or if they did, what does it signify?"

"I'm ashamed of you, Lucy Bramer, that's what I am!" exclaimed Betsey, more enraged than ever; "and I tell you what, you have no regard for your family."

"Indeed but I have; I supported my dear mother till her death, and never would have married had she lived."

"I know you have a *good heart* towards every one belonging to you," replied Betsey, moved, for tears had risen to Lucy's eyes; "but I mean you have no regard for the pride of your family."

"My father was only a tailor," replied Lucy meekly; "so I have only the honest name he left me to be proud of, and being married by licence would not support that!"

Betsey gave Lucy two looks of contempt, which

she did not see, for she had been shaping the end of the riband into a heart: one disparaging look was for the tailor, another for Lucy's mean spirit. She paused a moment, and then, tossing her head as if it had been already crowned with the crimson ribands, said, "Well, Lucy, you must excuse my being bride's-maid, that's all; for, though other people hav'n't no fathers, nor people of their own, I'm not so, thank God; and I'll never be *tail* to a wedding that hasn't got a licence!"

"If your honour plases," said a poor woman, whose plebeian name of Oran had nothing illustrious in its sound or connection, "my daughter *wouldn't mind* taking a sarvice in England, though she would not like to do it here, *because of her people*."

"Well, if her people" (relations) "do not like her to go to service, let them support her; or, at all events, give her a sufficient quantity of clothes to shield her from the inclemency of the weather."

"Oh, your honour, sure as to the bit and the sup, me and mine could have it from them for ever! But where would they have clothes for all belonging to them? Where would they get them?"

"Then why not send her where she could earn them? There are plenty of farmers, respectable farmers, who would be pleased to take your daughter into their service."

"But, don't you see, her people? Sure they'd look down upon her—all dacent, keeping their bits of walls over their heads, and their own cow and pig

and the likes of that; not one of their breed at service. But she has a turn that way, and if she was out of the country, why then, *nobody would know it.*"

Here was a woman—a widow with five children, living almost on charity, and yet indisposed to send her daughter—a nice-looking, cheerful, healthy, and, I do believe, industrious girl—to service, because her relations were what in Ireland are called "small farmers." This is but one instance out of twenty that came under my own observation, not six months ago, of a similar indisposition to exertion, *not from idleness*, but from a dislike to what, in their opinion, would lower "their family pride." The results of this failing are, as I have observed, sometimes of a laughable but more frequently of a melancholy nature. I could not look round upon the domestic circle of some whom I both love and respect without feeling my heart sink at the gloomy prospect of griefs, troubles, and privations which I know future years must bring to many a bright eye and many a blushing cheek among them.

A family of six, eight, or ten young people, brought up in the careless and rude plenty of Irish hospitality; beloved by their parents, indulged, as children of abundance invariably are; never thinking of the future; the naturally fine capabilities of the females cultivated to the point that is conceived necessary as most attractive—knowing a little of everything, but nothing well. The girls kind, affectionate, good-natured, to an

extent never met with in an English family; but thoughtless, untidy, and extravagant to a degree equally unknown in this well-regulated country. The sons, growing up—most wonderful politicians!—exulting either in the full-blown honours of the Orange, or elevating the cap of liberty, with its shamrock garland, upon the longest rifle in the land; ready to cut each others' throats for the sake of party or of pride, but not at all prepared to make any *personal* sacrifice for the good of their common country!—the most party-loving, but the most unpatriotic youths on earth: they fish, and shoot, and lounge; and (barring the politics) are the most obliging, attentive, and, generally speaking, well-informed fellows in the world! Yet, what are their prospects? The father of the family possesses, probably, a limited, certainly an embarrassed, income, which, perhaps, living in Ireland, he can neither extricate nor increase. Perhaps, also, one or two of his daughters marry; the rest live at home, adding to their father's embarrassments, or spend six months here, six months there, amongst their friends—indulging in a species of *decent* beggary, which *the proud* in Ireland do not disdain.

In England, under such circumstances, those young ladies would have depended, after a certain age, on their own resources. If their father was rich, and their allotted fortunes ready, they would remain together; but, if he was embarrassed!—thank God!—an Englishwoman's pride is in the

discharge of her duty! She might feel sorry for the necessity which rendered it incumbent on her to procure employment for the talents with which she had hoped to enliven her beloved home; but this sorrow would only stimulate her to exertion: nor would she lose caste by such conduct; on the contrary, she would be the more respected.

As to the sons! But a short dialogue between an English and an Irish gentleman will at once illustrate my meaning.

"Your eldest son, of course, will succeed to the estate; but I wonder you did not think of some profession for him. Our properties are of the same amount, and we have the same number of children; but my eldest son has just entered the Middle Temple."

"Ah! Charles has left college, and none of the elder sons of my family have ever had a profession."

"What will you do with Alfred?"

"Why, Alfred was intended for the army, but at present it is absolute madness to think of it; so poor Alfred is obliged to wait at home for a war."

The English gentleman did not see *the necessity* of Alfred's *waiting* at home, on the chance of a disagreement with our foreign allies; but he did not care to say so, and inquired what was to be done with Robert.

"Oh, Robert is so steady, so very steady, in fact, that we always designed him for the Church. He

passed through college with great éclat, and is now only waiting for a title to orders."

"But, my dear friend, could not Robert take pupils?—Many young gentlemen in England, and some here, I am happy to observe, are able to support themselves by such praiseworthy exertions."

The colour mounted to the old gentleman's temples, while he replied, "Yes, but Mrs. Blake's connections are even more high than mine. Robert did wish to do something of the kind, but his mother—you know it is a national feeling that those of ancient family do not exactly like to enter into that species of occupation which would create a coolness between them and their powerful relations; and Mrs. Blake's second cousin is Bishop of ——. When *he* provides for one or two more immediate connections, I make no doubt he will think of Robert!"

So upon the chance of the bishop's thinking of him, Master Robert was to exist!

"But there is another, a singularly fine boy," persisted the English gentleman—"almost a young man—what is he intended for?"

"Oh, Edward!—Edward is the youngest, and was always passionately attached to the sea. Mrs. Blake's brother died an admiral; and Edward, when a tiny fellow, used to say he would be an admiral also. But Mrs. Blake did not like the idea of her pet boy roughing it amongst the midshipmen of a ship, to which he might have been appointed, because there were one or two youths on board,

lads of such exceptionable characters *as to descent*, that she dreaded his making low connections. The time passed on, and he is now too old, and the power of the old families is decaying fast; and unless he entered the merchant service (which would break his mother's heart), I really do not see what we shall do with him; for his heart is on the waves—he is everlastingly boating, and is beloved by the whole country."

And so he was, poor fellow! he was so handsome, so generous, so affectionate. But they may mourn him now, for he is dead!—drowned!—nobody knows how—in the clear sunny lake of his father's wild and beautiful park. He who might have revived the declining honours of his house—a noble, brave boy—his restless and impatient spirit struggled between obedience to the pride and folly of his mother, and that eager longing after activity and distinction which spurs our natures on to immortality. Poor Edward Blake! I never hear "the blood of the Blakes" boasted of, without thinking of the pure rich current which perished in his veins!

It is much easier to perceive a fault than to suggest its remedy. The extravagant pride which flourished in Ireland some forty years ago, with a luxuriance it would be difficult to imagine now, has been very much shorn of its proportions; time and circumstances have in some degree destroyed it. A more extended knowledge of the world in general, and the English world in particular, has

made its way into the wilds of Kerry and the fastnesses of Connemara. Many have been brought to see the absurdity of such extravagant pride, and its unfitness for the present state of things; others, whose forefathers possessed the land for centuries, have been swept, as by a pestilence, from the country. I have listened for names which my mother has said were familiar to her as household words, but they were nowhere spoken: the old men of whom I heard so frequently, died proudly and silently within the crumbling halls or castles of their ancestors; their graves had been closed by grey-headed and humble friends, who considered service rendered to "an ould ancient family" as sacred and obligatory as a religious duty; and if they left children, they are only to be found amongst the troops, or in the forests of foreign lands.

I noted these things, and I found how bitterly pride had cursed my native country. There are other curses, dark and heavy, resting on its devoted head; but surely the principle which cramps exertion must be one of the most dangerous for a land, united as Ireland is to another, where enterprise and energy turn what they touch into gold.

The contrast between the two islands is humiliating; yet the casual traveller sees little of it. The genuine hospitality of the inhabitants—the unhappy talent they possess for keeping up appearances—their gay and cheerful manners—are all calculated to mislead those who have not resided

amongst them. The feeling extends from the lady of the house to the slattern in the kitchen—everything puts on its finery *for the credit of the family*. No matter how great is the extent of pecuniary embarrassment, nor how increased, as long as it is to be had they will have it, careless of the ruin that must follow.

"What will I do intirely," said an old butler in an old family, which has now no representative, for the only heir was killed in a duel about fifteen years ago (I have heard that the quarrel originated as to the spelling of a name!), "what will I do? Quality coming down from Dublin, and not a coat to my back!"

"I'd buy a coat out of my own wages rather than wear that," replied the footman of a neighbouring house, where the management was better.

"I'd do that same if I had my wages," replied the old man; "but I've not seen cross or coin of them these three years."

"Then why don't you ask for them, or leave?" inquired the other.

"Where's the good of my asking when I know it's not in it," replied the affectionate creature; "and as to leaving! you know nothing about it. Who'd stand up for the credit of the family if I was to leave? I that have been with them so long, and my father before me. No; I've been thinking I'd *borrow* a coat for the time the quality stays. There's ne'er a man on the townland would refuse me the loan of one *for his honour's credit*."

But the respectful and attached feeling with which the poor Irish regarded their superiors is fast declining. They used to be proud, like the old butler, "for his honour's credit"; now they take out a patent for pride on their own account—the pride is not decreased, but its *object* is changed.

I wish, with all my heart, that I could perceive in the lower classes of the Irish that spirit of independence which renders our English peasants of such blunt, stern honesty. Here, the landlord is civil to his tenant—*there*, the tenant used to be servile to his landlord; and still, though he may burn his house or cut his throat *secretly*, to mark his displeasure of his conduct, yet he bears himself when in the presence of his superiors more with the air of a serf than a free man. Despite this serf-like manner, *pride* rankles in the peasant's heart and stirs their blood—if the passion be not exercised *for* his master, it will be exercised *against* him.¹

The union of pride and poverty is, I believe

¹ When—Murphy, I think, was his name—the misguided man who murdered Mr. Foote near New Ross, in the county of Wexford, was hung, his father, an aged person, was present at the execution. The wretched father never attempted to deny his son's guilt—never thought it worth denying. The murderer had established a pride and a will of his own, and Mr. Foote's plans interfered with them—the result is but too well known. No tear dimmed his father's eye, nor did he, I was informed, utter a word until the body ceased to move; then, turning from the spectacle, he exclaimed, "To think of my losing my beautiful boy for *ould Foote*!" What pride nestled in that extraordinary observation!

suniversally acknowledged. The first endeavour to shield the child of its own creating, but its shadow is as the shadow of the poisonous upas tree: the shadow lies heavy upon my poor country.

The upper classes, from the Giant's Causeway to Cape Clear, will, I doubt not, in a few years see the absurdity of this passion; and future generations may testify that Irish pride differs in no respect from the proper dignity which calls upon nations and individuals to respect themselves.

But how shall we take from the lower orders, whose names are their only inheritance, the feeling that they are degraded by the occupations which bring prosperity to England? How teach them to feel that beggary is more disgraceful than servitude? Would a judiciously arranged code of poor laws effect this, as well as other desirable objects? Certainly, poor laws, administered as they are in England, would do more harm than good in Ireland. The legislator would do well to take into his consideration the great difference that exists between the two countries: however displeasing it may be to say so, I have no hesitation in affirming that, in civilisation, Ireland is at this moment a century behind England. In addition to its poverty, it has a host of prejudices and superstitions to overcome, which are continually drawing it back from improvement and weighing it down towards destruction. Its children are the children of impulse: a single idea fixes itself upon their imaginations, and from that they

act. Their powers of comparison are weak, because they are seldom exercised. If the laws are opposed to their prejudices, they rise in arms against them; and if they are framed altogether in accordance with their wishes, they will be anything but a national benefit. The lower orders of Irish are a difficult class of persons to deal with: those who legislate for them ought to be well acquainted with their modes, their moods, their peculiarities, their virtues, and their vices; and, above all, thoroughly informed as to *their religion*, as it really exists at this moment. I do not mean so much in theory as in practice. It is wretched to think of the misery to which the old and feeble among the poor are subjected; though it draws forth the virtues of the youthful and the industrious. The aged are burdensome to their children, when in England they would find support from the parish: thus a day-labourer frequently has not only the future, but the past generation to support. I remember, some time ago, entering the hovel of a poor man, in the neighbourhood of Kilkenny. It was, as is usual in that district, a most miserable dwelling: the thatch overgrown with moss and Scotch grass; there was not so much as a chair to sit on; the noonday meal of potatoes was thrown from the iron pot into a kish, which was placed upon a stool, nearly in the centre of the room; round this the ragged family crouched, like witches round a cauldron. There were five children. The father, if not bowed down

by labour and the want of proper nourishment, would have been a handsome, fine-looking man, not more than eight or nine and twenty. The wife had been a lovely girl; but she married him when seventeen, and bestowed five blessings on her husband in six years! At three-and-twenty the blood had curdled in her cheek, and her blue eyes were bleared from smoke, and often blinded by tears! Yet the smile was fresh and friendly on her lips; the curtsey and the "kindly welcome" were offered; the children huddled away in a corner—and then it was that the *elders* of the family became visible. In addition to his five little ones, this poor man supported his wife's grandmother, an old crone, arrived at octogenarian dignity; and his own father, who had been bed-ridden for many years—the "warm corner" was bestowed on the crone, and the straw pallet of the more afflicted father decently covered with both rug and blanket.

This labourer's wages, one month with another, was tenpence a day!—Tenpence a day, to feed and clothe nine people! The hovel which they inhabited, and a few perches of land, were rent-free. "But for this," said the young man, "we could not live at all! The woman cuts and sets the pratees—the children are too soft" (young) "to put a hand to anything—*barring their mouths*—but it's God's will to lave us together!"

"And do you not receive some assistance towards the support of these old people?"

"Oh, the neighbours are mighty kind; but sure they're no better off than ourselves—they've their own ould people to look after; for no one breathing could cast away their own flesh and blood. My father and her granny used to go out on the *shocharawn*" (begging) "until they got a-past moving; and the quality was often kind to them."

The withered woman raised her head from the shrivelled bosom on which it had sunk, and there was a passing expression in her eye, lack-lustre though it was, that convinced me her spirit had never been of gentle mood.

"Kind was it of them?" she repeated in a voice of feeble treble. "Oh, mighty kind to be sure! But tell the lady that Granny Wade was *no beggar*; she only asked a mite from such as have all now of what those she come from called their own, and was their own, long ever ago—it wasn't charity she asked, though she travelled far for food! If the devil takes from God's angels what God gave them, isn't it natural for them to try for it? And——"

"Whisht, granny! whisht!" exclaimed her granddaughter. "I hope you'll excuse her, ma'am dear; she's ould, and feeble in the head, and says things without a meaning. *The pride, ma'am, is strong in her to the last*; and I can't deny that some of 'her people,' as she lets on—long ever ago—were the heart's blood of the gentry; only I suppose times change, and Loch Valley——"

"Who spakes of Loch Valley?" interrupted the crone.

"Whisht, granny, honey! whisht! Here's a taste of beautiful tobaccy for you to warm your heart, and don't be vexing yourself about what's past and gone. What's Loch Valley or any other valley to us now, barring we'd get a day's work in it, and thank yer honour, for that same, to the man that's in it!"

What a strange mingling of pride, poverty, and the most beautiful and truthful filial piety were beneath that wretched roof! How difficult it would be to legislate, kindly and wisely, for such a group! I must not, however, dwell upon incidents when I have stories to relate, combining the grave and gay, which I hope will not be uninteresting to the English, or, dare I add, *unprofitable* to the Irish reader!

If I have a quick perception of my country's faults, God knows I trust I have a warm heart towards her virtues and the deepest sympathy with her sorrows.

LILLY O'BRIEN

The sweet Lilly of Bannow !—I shall never forget the morning I first saw her. Her aunt—who does not know her aunt, Mrs. Cassidy?—her aunt is positively the most delightful person in the whole parish. She is now a very old woman, but so “knowing” that she settles all debatable points that arise among good and bad housewives—from Mrs. Connor of the Hill down to “Polly the Cadger”—as to the proper mode of making mead, potato-cakes, and stirabout; and always decides who are the best spinners and knitters in the county—nay, her opinion, given after long deliberation, established the superiority of the barrel, over the hand, churn. There is, however, one disputed matter in the neighbourhood, even to this day. Mrs. Cassidy—(it is very extraordinary, but who is without some weakness?)—Mrs. Cassidy will have it that a quern—an obsolete hand-mill of stone, still patronised by “the ancient Irish”—grinds wheat better than a mill, and produces finer flour; she therefore abuses all mills, both of wind and water, and persists in grinding her own corn, as well as in making her own bread. By the bye, this

very quern was in great danger some time ago, when an antiquary, who had hunted hill and dale seeking for Danish or Roman relics (I forget which but it is of little consequence), pounced upon it declared it was a stone bowl of great antiquity, and that Mrs. Cassidy's maiden name, "Maura O'Brien," carved on it in Irish characters, proved it to have been used, either by Dane or Roman, in some religious ceremony or Bacchanalian rite, I cannot take it on myself to say which:—but this I know, that the old gentleman was obstinate; had been accustomed to give large sums for ugly things of every description, and thought that Mrs. Cassidy could be induced to yield up her favourite for three guineas. He never was more mistaken in his life: nothing could have tempted Mrs. Cassidy to part with her dear quern; so he left the neighbourhood, almost heart-broken with disappointment.

I respect the quern myself, for it was the means of introducing me to the sweet Lilly. There, that little path, bordered with oxlips, primroses, and unobtrusive violets—

"Whose deep blue eyes,
Kiss'd by the breath of heaven, seem coloured by its skies"—

that path leads to Mrs. Cassidy's dwelling. You cannot see the cottage, it is perfectly hidden—absolutely wooded in; but it is a rare specimen of neatness. The farmyard is stocked with ricks of corn, hay, and furze; with a puddle-like pond for ducks and geese, and a sty for a little grunting

animal, who thinks it a very unjust sentence that consigns a free-born Irish pig to such confinement. How beautiful is the hawthorn hedge!—one sheet of snowy blossom—and such a row of beehives!—while the white walls of the cottage are gemmed over with the delicate green, half-budded, leaves of the noble rose tree, that mounts even to the chimney-top: the bees will banquet rarely there, by and by. A parlour in an Irish cabin!—yes, in good truth, and a very pretty one: the floor strewn with the ocean's own sparkling sand; pictures of half the head saints of the calendar, in black frames, and bright green, scarlet, and orange draperies; a corner cupboard, displaying china and glass for use and show, the broken parts carefully turned to the wall; the inside of the chimney lined with square tiles of blue earthenware, and over it an ivory crucifix and a small white chalice full of holy water; six high-backed chairs, like those called "education" of modern days; a well-polished round oak table, and a looking-glass of antique form, complete the furniture. The window—forget the window!—oh, that would be unpardonable! It consists of six unbroken panes of glass, and outlooks on such a scene as I have seldom witnessed. Let us open the lattice—what a gush of pure, invigorating air! Behold and gaze—ay, first on the flower-bed that extends to where Mrs. Cassidy, with right good taste, has opened a view in the hawthorn hedge; then on, down that sloping meadow, dotted with sheep and echoing the plaintive bleat of the young

and tender lambs; on, on to the towering cliff, which sends, leaping over its blackened sides, a sparkling, foaming torrent, rapid as lightning and flashing like congregated diamonds, when the sun's brightness is upon it, to the wide-spreading sea, which reposes in its grandeur like a sheet of molten silver. Yonder torrent is strangely beautiful. The rock from which it gushes is dark and frowning, not even a plant springing from its sterile bed; yet the pure water issues from it, full of light, life, and immortality, like the spirit from the Christian's clay. Dear Mrs. Cassidy loves the sea: her husband was owner and commander of a small trading vessel; and her happiest days were spent in coasting with him along the Irish, English, and Welsh shores. He died in his own comfortable home, and was quietly buried in Bannow church, leaving his widow (who, but for her rich brogue, might, from her habits, have passed for an Englishwoman) and one son independent of the frowns or smiles of a capricious world. They had wherewithal to make them happy in their own sphere.

Edward was, even at two years old, an embryo sailor; a careless, open-hearted boy, who loved everything ardently, but nothing long—except, indeed, his mother, who often regretted that his rambling disposition afforded her so little prospect of enjoyment in after life. She had a brother in the north of Ireland, who, dying, left an only child, our fair Lilly, lovely and desolate in a cold world: but Mrs. Cassidy would not suffer any of her kith

WOULD IT POUT WITH ITS BIDDY?

From a Painting by
ERSKINE NICOL, R.S.A.



or kin to want while she had "full and plinty"; and, accompanied by Edward, then a youth of fifteen, she journeyed to Tyrone, and returned to her cottage with the orphan girl. Soon after this circumstance (of which I was then ignorant), I paid the good lady a visit; and when the country topics, of setting hens, feeding calves, and the dearness of provisions, were exhausted, I inquired if she still used her quern?

"Is it the quern?—and that I do, lady. Just look at this!"—(producing a very nice and snowy cake). "And, sure, bad manners to me for not ax-ing ye to taste it, and my own gooseberry, before! Look at this: there's not a mill in the counthry could turn ou' such bread as that; and if ye like to see it at work, I've just lifted it under the thorn yonder, to the sunny side of the ditch, and been instructing a poor colleen, that the world 'ud be after hitting hard because she'd no friends, never a one, barring me, if I hadn't brought her here to be like my own—and why not, sure! and she my brother's child? Well, I've been teaching her how to use the quern, as in duty bound. She's helpless as yet, but she shall soon know everything."

I followed Mrs. Cassidy into the garden, and, looking towards "the sunny side of the hedge," saw the child she had mentioned. She was then thirteen; her figure slight and bending as a willow wand, and the deep black of her low frock finely contrasted with a skin transparently white. Her hair fell in thick curls over her neck and shoulders,

and in the sunbeams looked like burnished gold. It was not red—oh no!—but a pale, shining, and silky auburn. She was occupied in turning the quern with one hand and letting the grain drop from the other. When she looked towards us and shook back the curls from her face, I thought I had never seen so sweet a countenance: her forehead was high and finely formed, but her soft blue eyes seemed acquainted rather with tears than smiles. There was something even more than polite in her address—it possessed much of rustic dignity; and the tones of her voice were like those of a well-tuned instrument.

The cottage now possessed for me a charm that was irresistible; for, superior as the people of Bannow are to the general Irish community, nothing so pure as the Lilly had ever blossomed among us before.

Even the rude peasantry seemed to look on her as something far above them; and when, accompanied by her aunt and cousin, she passed up Carrick-hill on the Sabbath morning, to join in the prayers and receive the blessing of the priest, they all watched her footsteps, and declared that she appeared "a'most like a born gentlewoman"—no small praise from the humbler Irish, who venerate high birth. Lilly's time was not idly spent: Mrs. Cassidy resolved that she should know everything; and as her childish days had been occupied solely in the business of education—as she read correctly, and wrote intelligibly—it was time, the good lady

thought, to teach her all useful occupations. Consequently, spinning succeeded knitting, and then came marking, shirt-making in all its divisions—namely, felling, stitching, button-holes, and sewing; then milking and churning; the best practical method of hatching and bringing up chickens, ducks, turkeys, geese, and even pea-fowl—two of the latter were, unfortunately for poor Lilly, given to her aunt just as she arrived at the cottage; then the never-ending boiling of eggs and chopping of nettle-tops for the young turkeys, that they might put forth their red heads without danger of croup or pip; then the calf, an obstinate orphan, had to be dosed with beaten eggs and new milk, because she would not feed as she ought; her cousin's and aunt's stockings to be regularly mended; and, worst of all, a dirty shoeless gipsy, the maid of all work to the establishment, was given to my sweet Lilly's superintendence—to Lilly, who had never known a mother's care, had been a foolish father's idol, and who had no more method or management than a baby of five months old. However, her patience and gentleness worked wonders; from before sunrise she toiled and thought, and at the end of six months astonished even Mrs. Cassidy. The quern never ground such fine flour, the poultry were never so well fatted, the needlework was never so neatly finished, and the cottage never so happy as since Lilly had been its inmate! When the toils of the day were comparatively ended, and the refreshing breezes of evening rambled among the sweet

yet simple flowers that blossomed in the garden, Lilly loved to sit and read, and watch the blue waters; and as the night advanced, gaze on the meek moon floating in the heavens.

She had resided nearly three years at the cottage, and was, one fine summer evening, sitting under the old thorn tree. Some grief must have been heavy at her heart, for tears, in the full moonlight, were trembling on her long eyelashes. Perhaps her aunt had been angry, or Edward had plagued her with too many of his never-ending errands.

"Well, cousin Lilly!" exclaimed a joyous voice, "I never saw such a queer girl as ye are. Ye've been trotting, and mending, and bothering all day, and now, instead of a race, or a dance, or anything that way, there ye sit, with yer ould books, and yer blue eyes, that bate the world for beauty. Lilly dear—tears! As I stand here, you've been crying! What ails ye, Lilly?—what ails ye, I say? I take it very unkind of ye, Lilly,"—and he sat down and took her hand with much affection,—"~~I take~~ it very unkind of ye to have any trouble unknown to me who loves ye" (Lilly tried to withdraw her hand) "as an own brother. Has mother vexed ye?"

"Oh no!"

"Well, then, cheer up! Come, come! James Connor has lent us his barn to-night, and I met Kelly the Piper going there, and there'll be a merry spree, and you must jig it with me, and Harry too, Lilly dear; and mother'll be glad ye go. Come, sure ye're a blessing to the ground ye walk on.

Come, put on yer pumps and white stockings. The people say ye're proud, Lilly, but ye're not—though ye might be, for there's not one in the parish like ye."

Lilly's heart fluttered like a caged bird as she did her cousin's bidding, and accompanied him to the barn, where the piper was blowing his best for the boys and girls, who footed gaily to their favourite jigs. The Irish, old and young, rich and poor, all love dancing; and if their national dance be rude and ungraceful, there is something heart-cheering in witnessing the hilarity with which it inspires them.

While Lilly and Edward were joining in the amusements of the evening, Mrs. Cassidy was sleeping or knitting at her kitchen fire, until disturbed by the raising of the latch, and the "God save all here!" of "Peggy the Fisher."

I wish I could bring Peggy "bodily" before you, but she is almost a nondescript. Her linsey-woolsey gown, pinned up behind, fully displayed her short scarlet petticoat, sky-blue stockings, and thick brogues; a green spotted kerchief tied over her cap—then a sunburnt, smoke-dried, flatted straw hat—while the basket of fish resting "on a wisp o' hay" completed her head-gear. Whenever I met her in my rambles, her clear, loud voice was always employed either in singing the "Colleen Rue" or repeating a prayer,—indeed when she was tired of the one, she always returned to the other,—and, stopping short the moment she saw me, she would commence with—

"Wisha, thin, it's my heart bates double joy to see you this very minit. Will ye turn yer two good-looking eyes on thim beautiful fish, leaping alive out o'the basket, my jewel. Och, it's thimselves are fresh, and it's they 'ud be proud if ye'd jist tell us what ye'd like, and then we'd let ye have it a dead bargain!"

Peggy was certainly the queen of manœuvring, and thought it "no harm in life to make an honest pinny out o' thim that could afford it"; but she had strong affections, keen perceptions, and much fidelity. Her ostensible trade was selling fish, but there was often more in her basket than met the eye—French silks, rich lace, or some drops of smuggled brandy for choice customers. When the farmers' wives could not pay her in cash, they paid her in kind—meal, feathers, chickens, and even sucking-pigs; which Peggy easily disposed of, so extensive were her connections. Then, she was the general match-maker and match-breaker of the county. Those who could write confided to her their letters; those who could not, made her the messenger of sweet or bitter words as occasion required. But to do Peggy justice, she has even refused money—ay, solid silver and gold—rather than prate of love affairs; for she pitied (to use her own words) "she pitied the young crathurs in love; well remimbering how her own soft heart was broke, many's the day ago." Peggy lived anywhere—everywhere. There were few, married or single, who either had not needed, did not need, or might

not need, Peggy the Fisher's assistance; and the best bit and sup in the house were readily placed before her.

"Och, Peggy, honey!" exclaimed Mrs. Cassidy, "is that yerself!—Sure 'tis I that's glad to see ye, agra. And what'll ye take?—a drop of tay, or a trifle o' whisky to keep the could out o' yer stomach, or maybe a bit to ate?—there's lashings o' white bread, and sweet milk, and the freshest eggs ever was laid."

"Thank ye kindly, Mrs. Cassidy, ma'am; sure it's yerself has full and plinty for a poor lone woman like myself. I'll take the laste taste in life o' whisky—and maybe ye'd take a drop o' this, ma'am dear—a little corjial I has, to keep off the water-flash," she added, with a peculiar expression of her left eye, as she placed her basket on the table.

"Have ye got anything striking handsome under thim dirty seaweeds and dawny shrimpeens, agra?" inquired Mrs. Cassidy.

"Maybe I have so, my darlint, though it's little a poor lone cratur like me can afford to do these hard times; and the custom-officers, the thieving villains, in Waterford, Duncannon, and about there, they's grown so 'cute that there's no doing wid them now at all. There's a thing that's fit for St. Patrick's mother, anyhow," displaying a green shawl with red roses on it. "There's a born beauty for ye!—and such natural flowers, the likes of it not to be met wid in a month o' Sundays! There's a beauty!"

"Sure I've the world and all o' shawls, Peggy,

avourneen!—and anyhow, that's not to my fancy. What 'ud ye be axing for that sky-blue silk handkerchief?"

"Is it that ye're after? It's the last I got o' the kind, and who 'ud I give a bargain to as soon as yerself, Mrs. Cassidy, ma'am?—And ye shall have it for what it cost myself, and that's chape betwixt two sisters. It's ra'al Frinch, the beauty!—and it's wronging myself I am to give it for any sich money—dog chape, at six thirteens."¹

"Och, ye Tory!" exclaimed Mrs. Cassidy: "six thirteens for that bit of a thing! Is that the way ye want to come over a poor widow, ye thief o' the world!" and she avoided looking at the tempting article by fixing her eyes on her knitting, and working with double speed.

"Well, mistress dear, I never thought ye'd be so out of all rason," and Peggy half folded up the handkerchief. Mrs. Cassidy knitted on, and never even glanced at it.

"It's for Miss Lilly, I'm thinking, ye want it; and sure there's nothing in life would look so very nate on her milk-white skin as a sky-blue handkerchief—and so, ma'am, yewon't take it, and it killing chape?"

Mrs. Cassidy shook her head.

"Well, to be sure, for you I would do——so, there!" (throwing it on the table) "ye shall have it for five thirteens; and that's all as one as ruination to myself."

¹ The English shilling was so called before the equalisation of the coinage, its value being thirteen pence.

"I'll tell ye what, Peggy, a'cushla!" and Mrs. Cassidy took off her spectacles and looked at the kerchief attentively,—“I'll tell ye what: it was four thirteens ye meant; and ye meant also to give Lilly two yards o' that narrow blue riband for knots, that ye promised her long ago.”

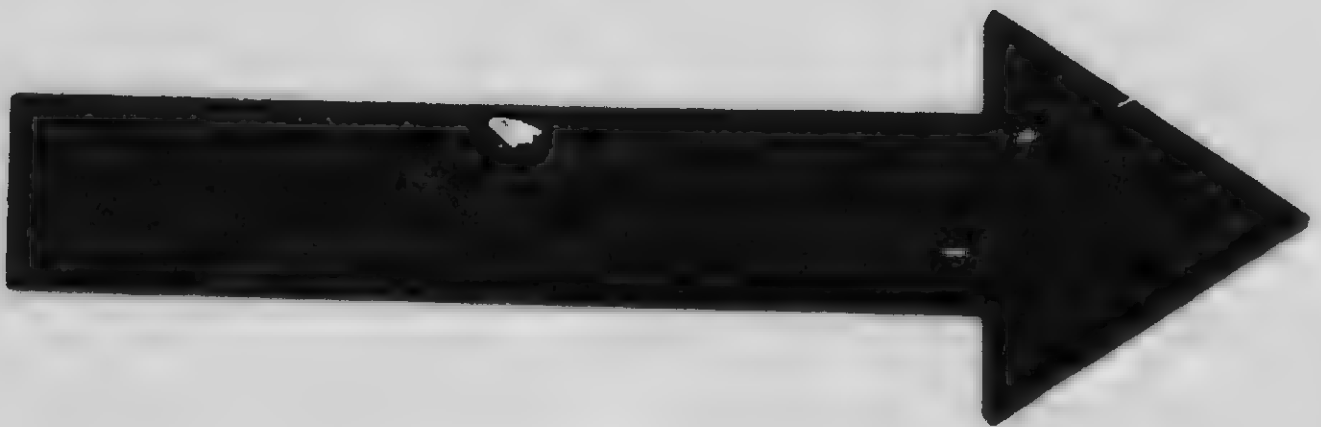
“I own to the promise, as a body may say,” responded Peggy,—“I own to the promise; but as to the four thirteens for such as that!—woman alive!—why——”

“Asy, asy, Peggy honey, no harm in life!” interrupted Mrs. Cassidy; “take the blue rag, it's no consarn o' mine.”

“Blue rag, indeed!—but”—after a pause—“it's no rag, Mrs. Cassidy, ma'am, and there's no one knows that betther nor you that has all the wisdom in the whole counthry to yerself; but, howsomever, take it; sure I wouldn't disagree with an ould residenther for the vallee of a few brass fardins.”

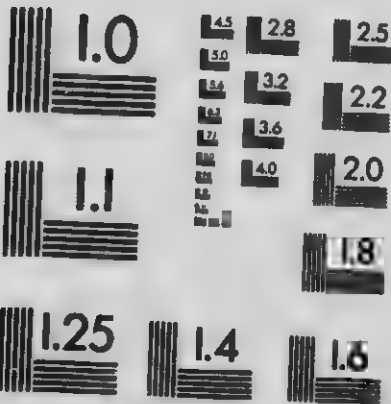
Mrs. Cassidy extracted from the depths of an almost unfathomable pocket a long stocking, slit like a purse in the centre seam, and tied with a portion of red tape at either end. From amid sundry crown, half-crown, “tin-pinny,” and “five-pinny” pieces, the exact sum was selected, paid, and the kerchief deposited in an ancient cupboard that extended half the length of the kitchen, and frowned, in all the dignity of Jamaica mahogany, on the chairs, settle, and deal table.

“The boy and girl are out, I'm thinking,” commenced Peggy, as she lit her cutty pipe and placed



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herself comfortably in the chimney corner, to enjoy the bit of gossip, or, as well-bred people call it, "conversation," which the ladies, ay, and the lords of the creation, so dearly love.

"They're stept down to Connor's, to have a bit of a jig. I'm right glad to get Lilly out, she's so quiet and gentle, and cares as little for a dance, and less, by a dale, than I do!"

"Och, ma'am dear, that's wonderful, and she so young, and so perfect handsome!—and more than me thinks that same."

"Who thinks so, Peggy?" inquired Mrs. Cassidy anxiously.

"What!—ye don't know, maybe?—Why, thin, I'll jist hould my tongue."

"Ye'll do no such thing, Peggy. Sure the colleen is as the sight o' my eye—as dear to my heart as my own child, which I hope she'll be one o' these days, plase God; and I tould ye as good as that before now—the time, d'ye mind, I bought her the green silk spencer. And why not? A'n't I rareing her up in all my own ways?—and isn't she o' my own blood? And Ned, the wild boy, that has full and plinty to keep him at home, if he'd jist mind the land a bit and give over his sailing talk, 'ud make a fit husband for her; and thin I could make my sowl, and die asy in yon little room, betwixt my son and daughter. And I tell ye what, Peggy the Fisher, there's no use in any boy's casting an eye at my Lilly, for Ned's wife she shall be; and I, Maura Cassidy, say it—that was never gain-

said in a thing she took in her head, by man or mortal."

"Very well, my dear, very well, why!" ejaculated Peggy, as, gathering herself over the dying embers of the turf fire, with her elbows on her knees, she jogged slowly backward and forward, like the rocking motion of a cradle. They both remained silent for some time. But Mrs. Cassidy's curiosity, that unwearying feeling of woman's heart, neither slumbered nor slept; and, after waiting in vain for Peggy to recommence the conversation, she could sustain herself no longer.

"Who was talking about Lilly's beauty, Peggy?"

"Oh, my dear, sure everybody talks of it; and why not?"

"Ay, but who in particular?"

"Och, agra!—no one to say particular—that is, very particular."

"I'll tell you what, my good woman," said Mrs. Cassidy, rising from her seat and fixing herself opposite the Fisher: "if I find out that you've been hearing or saying anything, or what is more, hiding anything from me, regarding my boy and girl, when I get you the other side o' the door—for I wouldn't say an indacent thing in my own house—I'll jist civilly tell ye my mind, and ax ye to keep yer distance, and not to be meddling and making wid what doesn't consarn ye."

Peggy knocked the ashes out of her pipe, crammed her middle finger into it to ascertain that all was safe, and, putting it into her pocket, curtsied to

Mrs. Cassidy, and spoke. "As to 'good woman,' that's what I was niver called afore; and as to not hearing, would ye have me cork my ears whin I hard Ned and Harry Connor discoorsing about the girl, and I at the other side o' the hedge? Och, och!—to think I should iver be so put upon! But good-night, good-night to ye, Mistress Cassidy—cork my ears, agra! And now," she continued, as she hastily stepped over the threshold, "I'm at the other side the door, so say yer say."

Mrs. Cassidy's curiosity was more excited than ever, and her short-lived anger vanished as Peggy withdrew.

"Stop, Peggy!—don't be so hot and so hasty: sure I spoke the word out o' the face,¹ and meant no harm. Come in, a'cushla; it's but natural I'd be fiery about thim, and they my heart's treasures."

In three minutes they were as good friends as ever, and Peggy disclosed the secret, which, notwithstanding her apparent unwillingness, she had visited the cottage to tell. "Ye mind the thorn hedge, where the hill slopes off?—well, the day was hot, and I tired with the heat, and the basket, and one little thing or another; and so down I sits on the shady side, thinking o' nothin' at all, only the crows—the craturs—flying to and fro, feeding the young rawpots that kicked up such a bobbery in their nests wid the hunger; and of what the priest said from the altar against smuggling, as if he was in right down arnest about it; and then it crassed

¹ Without consideration.

my mind, to be sure, how hard it was for a poor lone body to make an honest bit o' bread these hard times, and the priest himself agin it. Well, by an' by, who comes shtreelin' up the hill at my back but your Ned and young Harry Connor; well, I was jist goin' to spake, but by grate good luck I held my wisht.¹ Well, the first word I hears was from Ned's own mouth, and they were a good piece off at the time, too. 'She's always the same,' says he, 'always—sure I love her as my own sistrer.' 'Maybe more nor that,' says Harry, quite solid. 'Harry,' says Ned, solid like, too, 'don't go to the fair wid a joke. Look, I'd suffer this arm to be burnt to the stump to do Lilly any good; heart friendship I have for her, and well she desarves it, but no heart love.' Wid that, my jewil! I thought Harry Connor 'ud have shook the hand bodily off Ned; and thin I hard Ned say as how he'd like a more dashinger girl for a wife nor his cousin; and thin, agin, he talked about travelling into furrin parts; and thin they comaraded how Ned 'ud bring them in company together as often as he could, and talked a dale o' the dance, and Ned said he never see the colleen yet he'd like to marry; and Harry's quite done over, for he swore he'd lay down his life for one look o' love from Lilly's eyes; and they kep' on talkin' and talkin', and I kep' creepin' an' creepin' alongside the ditch, till the road turned:—and ye know it was my duty to find the rights of it, and you consarned."

¹ Held my tongue—kept silent.

Mrs. Cassidy waxed very wroth as Peggy's narrative drew towards a close; she had made up her mind that the cousins should be married, and thought she had managed the matter admirably. She was always praising Edward to Lilly, and Lilly to Edward; and it was quite impossible to think that two creatures so perfect (notwithstanding, it must be confessed, that her son often occasioned her much anxiety), and, in her opinion, so well suited to each other, should be constantly in each other's society without falling in love. Lilly's anxiety to promote her cousin's happiness, the perfect willingness with which she made all her industry, all her amusements, yield to his caprice, convinced Mrs. Cassidy that she would not oppose her wishes: and then came another puzzling consideration—Edward had always appeared so very fond of Lilly! The poor woman was fairly baffled. How she wished that Harry Connor was little, old, and withered as a cluricawn! but no, he was tall, handsome, and more gentle, more polished than her son. Ned was gay and careless as ever: his raven hair curled lightly over his finely formed head, and his hazel eyes, full of bright laughter, accorded well with the merry smile that played round his mouth. He was frank and generous, but he was also violent and capricious. Had Lilly not been so much with him, nay, perhaps, even had he not instinctively felt that his mother wished him to marry her, he might have fallen over head and ears in love. He admired and respected Lilly, yet her quiet virtues

were a silent reproach to his heedlessness, and at heart he longed to sail on the blue waters and visit other lands. Next to his mother and cousin in his regard came Harry Connor; and Harry well deserved it. He was a most extraordinary Irishman—cautious and prudent, even when a youth, and gentle and constant. The second son of an opulent grazier, he had been educated for the priesthood, and would, no doubt, have been useful in his ministry, for he had kindly feelings towards all his fellow-creatures, but that the death of his elder brother made it necessary for him to assist his father and family in the management of the grass farm.

Poor Mrs. Cassidy!—do you not pity her? Mothers are the same, I believe, all the world over; and really it is "too bad" that an outcry should be raised against their innocent manœuvres, though it must be confessed they are sometimes very annoying, and not unfrequently end in a manner little to be anticipated. Poor Mrs. Cassidy! After a few moments' cogitation, she was about to give vent to her anger, when the sweet voice of Lilly was heard, bidding "good-night and thank ye kindly," to—Harry Connor.

"Stay, stop, asy!" ejaculated Peggy, jumping up "If that's Mither Harry, maybe" (calling after him) "ye'd jist give me, a poor cratur, a bit o' yer company down the lane, that I don't like to go alone. Good-night to ye kindly, and the blessing be about ye." And basket and all went off at a short trot—Peggy's peculiar gait.

"What ails ye, aunt dear?" affectionately inquired Lilly; for Mrs. Cassidy had not spoken.

"What ails *you*, girl alive—or dead—for ye're as white as a sheet—and where's Ned?"

"Ned went a piece of the way home with Katey Turner," replied Lilly, blushing, and tears gathering in her eyes at the same time.

"And you came a piece with Harry Connor?"

"I could not help it, aunt dear," said Lilly earnestly. "Sure, Ned ran off with Katey, and asked Harry to see me home."

"He did, did he? Why, then," cried the dame, rising in a passion, "I'll soon tache him betther manners, the reprobate!"

"Oh, aunt, dear aunt!"—and poor Lilly threw her arms around Mrs. Cassidy's neck—"oh, don't say a hard word to Ned—oh, maybe he couldn't help it!" and she burst into tears. "But don't, oh, don't, for the sake o' her that never angered ye, don't say a hard word to Ned!"

"Ye're a good girl, I'll say that for you, anyhow, my own colleen," said Mrs. Cassidy, kissing her fair forehead. "There, go to bed, my darlint; ye look very pale, a'n't ye well!"

"Yes, aunt, thank ye; but ye're not angry with Ned?"

"Well, well, go to bed; I'll not scold him much, avourneen?"

"Not at all, at all, my own dear aunt!"

"Well there, agra, you've begged him off. Stay a minute, gramachree!"—Lilly was mounting the

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BRIGHT PROSPECT

From a Painting by

ERSKINE NICOL, R.S.A.



steps that led to her small chamber : she returned. "I just wanted my child to tell me why she calls me aunt now, that used to call me mother when first she came to me. Lilly darlint! am I less a mother to ye now than I used to be?"

"Oh no, no, no!—not that, dear a——mother," she stammered out, and again her face and bosom were red,—“not that!”

"What, then, Lilly love? I hope I'm yer frind, and ye ought to tell me."

"Oh, nothin' at all—only Katey and the girls laughed when I called you mother, and said——"

"What did they say?"

"Oh, all a folly!—only they said—'twas all a folly—they're very foolish, I'm sure."

"Well, but what was it, a'cushla?"

"Why, that there could be only three sorts of mothers—born mothers, and stepmothers—and, and—oh, it's all a folly"—(poor Lilly covered her face with her shawl)—“mothers-in-law."

Mrs. Cassidy replied not, but kissed her cheek, and then Lilly flew up the ladder—closed her door—after a pause, half opened it again, and without showing her face, said, "Remember, you promised not to be angry with Ned."

Lilly's feelings were both new and painful; she wept very bitterly, as she knelt at the side of her humble couch and pressed her face to the coverlet. Was it because her aunt was angry with Edward? No; for her anger was like the shower in April, ardent, but passing soon. Was she vexed at

Edward's attention to Katey? She certainly thought he danced, laughed, and jested with her more than was necessary—but why unhappy at that?—Katey was her friend, Edward her cousin. When Harry pressed her hand with so much tenderness at the cottage door, why did she shake it from him, and feel as if insulted? Lilly knew not her own heart, and wondered why she had spoken so sharply to poor Harry—Harry, who lent her books, and whose kindness was proverbial all over the parish. She was bewildered; all she knew was, that she was more unhappy than ever she had been in her life. She sat long, trying to collect her senses, and at last the rushlight sank into the socket of the white-ware candlestick—it had been her cousin's present. Then she again remembered that, although the moon-beams had long since peeped through her little window, Edward had not returned. She opened the casement, which enclosed only two small panes of glass: the glorious prospect lay before her, and the watch-light gleamed brightly, over the dark blue waters, from the distant tower of Hook. The weather had been calm and clear, and the full-blown roses, that had never felt a rough blast or a chilling shower, imparted their sweet fragrance to the midnight air: the path by which Edward would return crossed the meadow, and her heart bounded when his figure appeared hastily striding homewards. "I hope he did not see me," thought she, as she closed the window: "yet why?—sure he's my cousin." In a moment after the

latch was lifted, and she distinctly heard her aunt say—

"A purty time o' night, indeed, for you to march home, Master Edward Cassidy!—and to lave me, a poor widow, and yer own mother, alone in this desolate hut."

"It's a comfortable hut, thin," replied Edward, laughing. "And how are ye lone, whin there's Lilly, and Ruth—the dirty sowl—and Bran, to say nothin' of ould puss, sitting so snug on the hearthstone?"

"How do you know Lilly's here? It's little ye care about her, or ye'd be far from letting that long gomersal of a fellow, Harry Connor, see her home, and you flirting off with that jilting hussey, Katey Turner."

"Katey Turner's no jilt, or flirt either, but a tight, clane-skinned little girl; and Harry's no gomersal at all, but an honest fellow, that 'll make a good husband for my handsome cousin one o' these days—and not long neither. What a wedding we'll have, for sartin!"

Poor Lilly's heart sickened, and her head felt giddy, as she heard these words. She never intended listening, but her respiration was impeded in the deep anxiety with which she waited for, yet dreaded, her aunt's reply. Mrs. Cassidy was struggling for utterance; she had seldom, perhaps never, been so enraged. Ned's words and perfect carelessness of manner had almost maddened her.

"Look ye, Ned—Ned Cassidy!" said she, after a pause, during which Edward saw the storm gather—

ing fiercely,—“look, I’d sooner see Lilly stretched on that table, as I’d sooner a hundred times, and a thousand to the back of them, keen at her berrin’, than see her thrown away upon that ownshugh! She’s for his betthers, though little they seem to think of it.”

“Whew! whew!—is that what ye’re after, mother dear? Well, then, now I’ll jist tell ye the rights of it, and then we’ll drop it for ever, Amin. As to Lilly, a betther girl niver drew the breath o’ life, and I regard and love her as a sister, but as to anything else, mother, I won’t marry—I’ll see the world. And, anyhow, she’s not the patthern o’ the wife I’d like.”

Mrs. Cassidy clenched her fist, and, holding it close to her son’s face, ejaculated, “Holy Mary!—ye born villain!—ye disobadient spalpeen!—ye limb o’ Satan!—ye—ye——! Down upon yer bare knees and ax my pardon for crassing¹ me; or, by the powers! I’ll have Father Mike himself here to-morrow mornin’ and marry ye out o’ hand.”

“I ax pardon for contradicting ye, mother, but ye’ll do no sich thing. Say two words more like that, and the dawn o’ day ’ll see me aboard the good ship *Mary*, that’s lying off Hook-head, where they’d be main glad of a boy like me, as I heard to-night, to go a few voyages, and see the world.”

“And is this the thanks I get for all my love, ye scoundrel?—to fly in my face after that manner! Ye may trot off as soon as ye please, but the priest shall

¹ Contradicting.

know yer doings, my boy. Och! ye ungrateful——! Down this minit, as I tould ye; and, as God sees and hears me, ye shall be married to Lilly before to-morrow's sun sets!"

"I see, mother, ye don't mane to listen to rason. But one word for all: by the blessing o' God, I'll not marry Lilly; and I don't care that" (snapping his fingers) "for priest or minister!"

"Take that, thin, for your comfort, and my heavy curse wid it!" And, enraged by her son's so wilfully destroying the hope that had latterly been the chief blessing of her life, in her fury she struck him a violent blow. Poor Lilly rushed to her door; but her powers were paralysed. She could not undo the simple fastening, but clung to the window, that was close to it, for support. Edward spoke not; and his mother's arm sank by her side. Her rage was abating, when Edward, bursting with smothered anger, which he pent up with a strong effort, deliberately took his hat, walked to the door, and out, without uttering a single word. "Ned, Ned!" exclaimed Mrs. Cassidy; but Ned returned not. Lilly, pale and wild in her appearance, in a few moments was at her aunt's side. She had seen the desperate haste with which her cousin crossed the garden, trampling the flowers in his path, and, alarmed lest his passion should lead him to some dreadful act, she rushed down the stairs.

"Oh! to think," said she, "after yer promise, that ye should be so cruel to your own child, and all for one like me! Oh, if I'd ha' thought it, sure the

grass shouldn't be wet under my feet before I'd be far from this house! Oh, call him back—call him back!—and I'll fly the place for ever!"

"He'll come back fast enough, I'll engage," said the widow, "he's not sich a fool." She opened the door, and saw in the moonlight his receding figure.

"He'll not, aunt. Oh, the blow!—the blow!—to think of your striking so high a spirit, and that *Mary* lying off Hook-head, and the mate of her, Katey's uncle, putting his comether on Ned! Sure I saw it, only I never thought it 'ud come to this, at the weary dance to-night."

"Indeed!" responded the mother, now really alive to the danger of losing her son. "Lilly, my darlint, you can save him; fly!—you can overtake him. There, he hasn't turned the lane yet. Tell him he shall do as he plases; say that I beg his pardon; only, as he valees his mother's blessing, not to desart her in her ould age."

Lilly snatched her cloak, drew it over her head, and ran, as fast as her strength permitted, after her wayward cousin, whose firm, quick step, as he paced towards the main road, rendered the maiden's fleetness almost ineffectual; but at length she stood panting, almost fainting, at his side. It was then that a tide of conflicting feelings deprived her of utterance; for the first time, she felt herself a rejected, despised creature, and that by the being a thousand times dearer to her heart than life itself. When he knew that she had overheard the dreadful conversation in the cottage, what must he think of her?

Modesty, the sweet blossom of purity, the mild glory of woman's life, had been outraged by her pursuing, even in such a cause, one who disdained her; and, as these ideas shot like fire through her brain, she caught at a tree for support, and murmured, "Holy Mary, direct thy child!" Edward spoke not, but looked on his cousin with more of bitterness and scorn than of any other feeling. Twice she tried to speak, but vainly she unclosed her parched lips. "Ned," she at length articulated, "you are going, I know, to lave us—her, I mane, your mother; and you know, Ned, she has no hope but you. Oh, Ned! Ned!—in her old age do not fly her! Think o' the time when she carried ye in sorrow and in bitter trouble; think——"

"Of the blow she gave me!" interrupted Edward fiercely. "By all the holy saints, if a man, ay, my own father, had dealt so with me, I'd—I'd have knocked him down and ground him into the hard earth!" And he stamped so violently that poor Lilly was terrified at the sudden burst of passion.

"Ned, you know you have provoked her, and——"

"And so you, Lilly," he again interrupted, "you, with all yer modesty and quietness, *you* colloqued against me too: and that's the upshot of your coming among us! Och! och! I thought ye had a more dacent spirit than to follow a boy to ax him to marry ye, and he your cousin!" Lilly, roused by this unjust sarcasm, was collected in a moment. Drawing her slight yet dignified figure to its full height, she shook her beautiful hair that had clustered

over her mournful countenance, and stood firm and erect, with the beams of the chaste full moon beaming upon her uncovered head.

"Ye don't know me, then ; and I have lived under the same roof with ye three years and more. But ye don't know me, Edward Cassidy : if, by axing the powerful King of England, who sits on his throne, to make me his queen, it could be done, the poor orphan girl would scorn it ! Lilly O'Brien followed ye not for that. The grate God, that sees all hearts, knows that the words I spake are true. Never, till this woeful night, did I think that yer mother wished me to be nearer to her than I am. Ye bitterly wrong me ; but that's not what I came to say. I tell ye that yer mother begs ye to come back, and not to trust to the wild sea, when every comfort in life is for ye on land. She asks ye to forget ; she even begs of ye, for Christ's sake, to forgive the blow. But stop, that's not all : I, the desolate orphan, who have, innocent-like, been the cause of all this misery—I beg of you, *you* that so insulted and wronged me—and I do to you what I never did to any yet, but my heavenly comforters—on my two knees, I beg ye to return. Edward Cassidy, you shall see me no more. I have no other home, but I am young, and, for a poor girl, not ignorant, praise be to your mother for it. I will quit the house for ever—ay, before the sun rises. Do not let me feel that I have driven the fatherless boy to labour, maybe to ruin !"

She raised her clasped hands as she spoke, and

her eyes, filled with the pure light of virtue, met the wild gaze of her cousin.

"Lilly," he replied, raising her from the ground and looking upon her more kindly, "things must go on as they are. What comfort would my mother—God help her!—have without you? I have been a trouble and a plague to her, but you have been like an own tender child, and smoothened every step. I'll go to sea for a while: it 'ill be long afore I can forget what she did to-night—whatever divil tempted us both to sich anger! I'll be well to do in the same ship wid Katey's uncle, and ye'll all be glad to see me, maybe, whin I come back. And, Lilly, I ax yer pardon for saying the say I did of you: it wasn't from the heart, only the temper. I *do* know ye betther: and my friend, Harry Connor, 'ill be a happy man yet, if ye'll only jist give him that young heart that's as innocent as a new-born babe. And now, God be wid ye! The *Mary* may sail at day-break. God bless ye!"

The heedless youth hastened on.

"Oh, Ned, Ned!—and won't ye say a word, or even make a sign, that I may tell yer mother all is peace?" He stopped and waved his hat over his head, and the belting of many foliage trees that enclosed Mr. Herriott's estate hid him from her sight. Tears came to her relief, and she felt happy that Edward did not suspect how dearly she loved him. She turned homeward with a sorrowing heart, and was proceeding slowly on, when Peggy the Fisher's little black dog, Coal (we beg his pardon for not

mentioning the very busy, ugly little gentleman before), ran out of a break in the adjoining hedge, and renewed his acquaintance with Lilly, by jumping and whining in that peculiar tone which shows a more than friendly recognition. Lilly was astonished, but still more so when the flattened hat and round rosy face of Peggy appeared through the same opening.

"Why, then, Miss Lilly dear, is it yer fetch?—or where are ye moving along, like a fairy queen, in the green meadows by the moonlight? Ah, gramachree!" she continued, forcing her way through the hedge, "ye look like a spirit, sure enough! My poor colleen! Sorrow soon withers the likes o' you."

Lilly felt sadly mortified, for she had little doubt that Peggy had overheard the conversation between her and Edward.

"So he's gone, the obstinate mule!—but I ax your pardon. I hard every word of it, over the hedge, just by accident, as a body may say; for you see, mavourneen, I was waiting for a particklar frind that promised to meet me about a little bit o' business that can't just be done by daylight, on account of the law. Och! it's hard for a lone woman to get a bit o' dacent bread; and the free rovers themselves are getting so 'cute that there's no coming up to thim at all, at all! I ut I'm keeping ye here, and the poor woman 'll be half mad till she hears tidings o' Ned, the boy. I'll walk a step wid ye, and be back time enough yet. God help me, I

must travel to Hook and Ballyhack too, the morrow mornin'. Och! but it's hard to 'arn an honest penny in this wicked world." And the lady smuggler crossed herself very devoutly.

"Hook! are ye going to Hook to-morrow mornin'?" inquired Lilly.

"Plase God, I'll do that same."

"Oh, Peggy, thin, it would be an act o' charity just to take Ned some o' his bits o' clothes and things. If he will go, sure he ought to go dacent. And I'll make up the bundle for him, and lave it under the black thorn, in an hour or two; for I'll try and get her to bed—the Lord console her!—and steal them out like, for I know she'll be too angry to send him any comfort yet a bit, and the ship may sail before she comes to herself."

"Why, thin, that's wise and good, the colleen 'gra! But sure you're the last that ought to grieve after the boy; it'll be well for you, for sartin. The old woman has all in her own power—and sure it's to the one that bides with her she'll lave it. Mind yer hits, and——"

"What d'ye mane by spakeing to me after that fashion?" said Lilly, darting a look of anger on her companion, which, if Peggy could have seen, she must have felt. "How d'ye think I could get such bitter black blood in my veins as to plan such devil's mischief as that? Keep that sort of advice for them that 'll put up with it! Lilly O'Brien scorns it."

"Hullabullo! there we go! Well, if ye're so

wrapt up in thim that doesn't care a skreed for ye, why, ye'd better just go to the fairy woman and get a charm, and bring him back, my purty Miss."

"I'll tell ye what, Peggy: I don't meddle or make with anybody, and nobody need meddle or make with me; nobody can say agin my liking my cousin—and why not? My aunt meant all kindly to both; but the thorns are sown and grown, and sure it's heart sorrow to think o' his flitting from his own home; but if he was willin' this minute to take me afore the priest, d'ye think I'd have the hand and not the heart? Fairy woman, indeed! I've no belief in such nonsense."

"Oh, to hear how she spakes o' the good people, and the very spot we're in, maybe—Lord save us!—full o' thim! Well, there's the house—I'll take the bundle safe, agra." She stopped for a moment to watch Lilly enter the cottage, and then muttered, "I can't make her out; she's either a born nathural, or something much above the common."

Lilly O'Brien found it a painful duty to administer consolation, where she herself so much needed it; but, after all, continual employment is the best balm to the sorrowing mind. Save that her cheek was somewhat paler and her gentle smiles less frequent, six months had made little change in my sweet Lilly's appearance. Not so was it, I am sorry to say, with Mrs. Cassidy, poor woman! She felt her son's desertion, as a mother only can feel; but still more she grieved when week after week passed, and the Bannow postman

brought no letter from the wandering boy. Post evenings found her at the end of the lane that led to her cottage, anxiously watching John Williams's approach. Still, no letter cheered her broken, restless spirit; though she would never confess that she wandered forth on this errand, every Monday and Friday found her on the same spot, and she was on those days more bustling and fidgety than usual. Sometimes she would abuse the absent one in no gentle terms; but Lilly never failed to remember some kind act of her cousin's, and her low musical voice, in the soft tones of unaffected feeling, was ever ready to plead for him. At other periods the widow would weep like a child over some little circumstance that brought Ned to her recollection. The flowers he planted blossomed—the beehives he had watched wanted thatching—or the table he had made lost its leg—or the pig wanted ringing. Lilly never mentioned him, except when her aunt led to it, but her eyelids were often heavy with tears.

Luckily for all parties, an event occurred that fully employed, for the time, my worthy old friend's thoughts and actions.

The windmill, that, from the landlord's depending on the steward to get it repaired—from the steward's depending on the mason to see to it—from the mason's depending on the thatcher—the thatcher on the carpenter—the carpenter on somebody, or nobody, or anybody but himself (after the true Irish fashion)—the windmill, Mrs. Cassidy's par-

ticular aversion—the windmill!—tha: had suffered a paralysis for more than five years, although everybody said how useful it could be made—the windmill was repaired, furnished with new wings, and commenced operations within the short space of three weeks, to the astonishment of the natives, who (I must confess it, however unwillingly) are like all the men and women of their country, the most procrastinating race on the face of the earth. Mrs. Cassidy was annoyed beyond measure. The quern was kept in constant motion, and Lilly was left at home in “pace and quietness,” while her aunt sidled from house to house, exhibiting specimens of the flour ground in her own cottage, and contrasting it with what he termed “the coorse trash o’ branny stuff, made up o’ what not, that comes out o’ that grinder a’ top o’ the hill.”

Mrs. Cassidy was from home; Lilly had finished her allotted portion of flour, and was quietly preparing the frugal supper, when our old acquaintance, Peggy the Fisher, and Peggy’s little dog, Coal, entered the cottage. Lilly had never forgotten the low cunning the Fisher had evinced on the evening, every transaction of which she so perfectly—too perfectly—remembered, and her pale cheek flushed, and a shadow passed over her brow, as she returned the greeting of the village busybody.

“I’m not for staying; maybe I’m not over welcome, Miss Lilly—but never mind, agra! Whin people’s angry wid people, and all for good advice, given from the heart, and wid good intintion all

through—why, people must only put up wid it until oder people see the rights o' it. Well, my dear young cratur, it's little ye knows o' the world yet: ah! it's a bad world for a dacent poor lone woman to get a bit o' bread in. But sure you'll not be lone in it; I see a handsome boy not tin minutes ago, that 'ud give his best eye—and, troth, it 'ud be hard to choose betwixt 'em—for one look of love from ye, as I hard him say, many's the day ago, with my own two ears."

"I am sorry for it, Peggy, if what you say is true; for no one in the wide world 'd o I love, barring my own poor aunt."

"Asy, child! Sure I'm not axing ye any questions—only it's long, maybe, since ye hard from beyant seas?"

"My a'int has never heard from Ned since he quitted," replied Lilly.

"Well, maybe, so best. No news is good news, they say."

"I hope so."

"Now, what 'ud ye say to a poor body that 'ud tel ye something?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said Lilly; "it would depend on what that something was."

"Well, thin, here it is;" and Peggy drew a dirty, sailor-like letter from her bosom, and placed it in Lilly's outstretched hand. "There, my colleen 'gra!—it's from Ned, sure enough; and for yourself. One who brought it tould me, for I've no larning,—how should a lone cratur like me get it! But it's

little ye'll like the news that's in it; and I don't know how the ould 'ooman 'ill like it, at all at all." Lilly stood unable to inquire, unable to open the letter she had so long wished for. Peggy, with her usual sagacity, saw the dilemma, and, settling the basket on her head, departed, with "God be wid ye, mavourneen!" Lily broke the wafer with trembling hand, and read as follows:—

"DEAR COUSIN,—This comes hoping you and my mother is well, as I am at present—thanks be to God for the same!—and likes the sea; but the land, somehow, is a saferrer life; particular for a family man, as I am, having married out o' love a girl I'm not ashamed of; an English born and bred, and well iddicated and mannered as need be for a boy like me. I'd have written afore, but didn't know how it 'ud end, as I was terrible in love. And now I ax my mother's blessing. And, Lilly dear, it's you that can get that for me; and I know ye'll do your best to make thin'gs comfortable. I'm sorry mother and I parted in anger; but it will be all for the best in regard of the wife. And I intind bringing her home to ye, and we'll all be happy thegither agin, plase God; and I'm detarmined my child sha'n't be an Englishman, so I mean my mother to be a grandmother soon, and ax her to love Lucy—she's handsomer than her name, and had a good penny o' money too, only it's clane gone; things are dreadful dear here; and I know you'll love her, for you were always kind. And I beg you to write by return of post, and send a trifle o' money; as, for the credit o' my people, I'd like to return home dacent. Lucy joins me in love and duty; and trust-

ing to yer good word, rests your affectionate friend
and cousin till death,
E. CASSIDY."

Lilly sat long with her eyes fixed on the letter. She did not weep; but her cheek was ashy pale, and her eyes were swollen. Poor girl!—she had used her best efforts to root love from her heart, or to calm it into that friendship which she considered duty; yet the shock she received, when the full truth was known, that Edward was actually married, and returning with his wife to Bannow, was almost too great for her to bear. She read the letter over and over again, and at last sank on her knees, earnestly imploring God to direct and keep her in the right way. She arose, strengthened and refreshed by the pious exercise, and her pure and noble mind saw at once the course that was to be pursued. Then she reflected on her plan. Her aunt, she knew, would be terribly enraged at his marrying at all. But an Englishwoman—a Protestant, most likely—it was dreadful!

"Lilly, my darlint, what are ye in such a study about?" said the old woman, as she entered. "I've good news for ye. That vagabone mill—— but save us!—why, ye're like one struck!—has anything turned contrary? It's not post-night, nor—— What ails ye, child? Can't ye spake at onct?"

"Sit down, aunt dear. There's a letter from Ned, and he's alive and well."

"Thank God for all His mercies to me and mine! Well, child?"

"And he's tired o' the sea, and coming home; and sure ye'll resave him kindly, aunt?"

"The cratur! and sure I will—why not? Sure it was only a boy's wildness after all. Resave him! after not setting my two eyes upon him for a whole tin months! Sure I will—and he'll like home all the betther! Och, I'm so happy!" The poor woman threw her arms around Lilly's neck and kissed her affectionately. "But what makes ye look so grave, my own colleen, that 'll be my raal——"

"Hush! whist! for God's sake, my dear, dear, dear aunt!" And Lilly fell on her knees. "Aunt dear, the night you and Ned had the bitter battle, ye promised me ye would not vex him, yet ye did."

"Well, agra?"

"Well, ye say the same thing now; and yet maybe ye'd do the same thing agin, for all that!"

"Well, Lilly darlint, there's no dread in life of it now, I am so continted. But where's the letter? Read me the letter. I knew he'd come back; I——"

"Aunt, I humbly ax yer pardon; have I, since Ned left ye, ever angered ye?"

"Never, my colleen."

"Then grant me this one prayer—maybe the last I'll ever ax ye, aunt!—swear, by this blessed Book, never to reproach Ned with anything that is gone and past, but to take him to your own fond heart, and trate him as a son for ever."

"It's a quare humour, my darlint, but I can't refuse ye anything to-night, I'm so happy; and

the letther to you and all, as fitting!" She took the Prayer Book in her hand. "To swear to forget all that's past, is it, mavourneen?—and to trate him—

"Sæ, him and his—him and his," interrupted Lilly breathlessly.

"That I will," replied Mrs. Cassidy, "and with all the veins of my heart; to forget all that's past, and trate him and his with love and kindness to the end of my days."

She kissed the cross on the page of the Prayer Book, after the manner of her religion, and was going to do the same to Lilly's fair forehead, when she ejaculated, "Thank God!" and fainted in her aunt's arms. She remained long insensible, and when the kind woman's efforts succeeded in restoring her the first words the poor girl heard were: "That's my darlint child!—rouse up; there, lane your head on my shoulder. No wonder, agra! he'd think o' those curls, and that gentle face, and that sweet voice that falls upon the ear widout ever disturbing it! Oh, sure ye'll be my raal child! I see it all; fitting, to be sure, that the letther should be to you. Sure he could not but remimber my darlint Lilly! Och, but I'm the happiest woman this minit in the big world, let t'other be who she will!"

A loud and heavy groan, as if the last effort of a bursting heart, which the maiden could not suppress, stayed the old woman's speech, and fixed her attention again on Lilly's ghastly features. "Tell

me directly, this minit, my brother's own child—tell me, is there anything in that lettther you've not told me, as you wish to be happy! Is Ned coming home?" Lilly moved her head in assent. "Is he well and happy?"

"Yes, aunt, yes."

"Then, in holy Peter's name, my lanna, what is it ails ye? Sure I see long enough ago that ye loved him in yer heart's core, and now—praise be to God!—whin ye'll be married, and my heart at pace, ye're taking on as if the boy was kilt entirely! Sure, whin ye're married——"

"Aunt, for the blessed Virgin's sake, name that last no more, for it can't be!"

"Don't dare to tell me that, unless ye mane to start the life out o' me at onct! Lilly, Lilly! sure, girl, ye've not been listening to Harry, and promised unknownst to me, out o' maidenly anger with Ned? If ye marry Harry Connor, Lilly, ye'll sup sorrow; for it's folly to talk, child—yer heart's not in it."

"I'll never marry either Ned or Harry, aunt, so don't mintion it."

"The girl's gone mad, clane mad," said Mrs Cassidy angrily. "Why, what's to put betwixt you and Ned now?"

"His wife!" replied Lilly solemnly, and for the first time pronouncing the word which banished every lingering hope from her heart,—“his lawful wife; who,” she added, “though born in a far counthry, will make ye a good daughter and a loving one when I lave ye.”

It would be impossible to describe the terrific rage of Mrs. Cassidy when informed of all the particulars. Even her noble-minded niece suffered from it; for when, forgetful of her oath, she declared Ned and his heretic wife should never find refuge in her house, "Remember," Lilly would say, and as she spoke the large tears would shower down her cheeks, "you swore on the blessed Book to forget the past, and to trate *him* and *his* with kindness to the end of yer days." Then Mrs. Cassidy reproached Lilly with "colloguing" against her; with "joining the whole world to make her desolate"; with "breaking her ould heart," and "splitting it into smithereens." Then she raved about Ned and his strange wife, and concluded with—"I'll bet my life she's no betther nor she should be."

"Oh, aunt, how can ye say such a word! D'ye think Ned 'ud be the boy to bring black shame to his mother's hearthstone? Oh no! Protestant she is—and English—and all that—but not bad; don't think that, anyhow."

"Well, anyhow, Lilly, if a boy sarved me as you've been sarved, I'd skiver his heart to his backbone. I wish ye had a betther spirit in ye."

Lilly replied not, but heartily rejoiced when the good lady's anger and repinings were hushed in a sound sleep. She entered her own room, and counted over her savings, for Mrs. Cassidy had ever given more than supplied her wants. She had hoarded, not from selfishness, but from a feeling of generosity, that she might have the means of

assisting some of her poorer neighbours; and this she had often done. With her hands, as well as with her money, had she bestowed cleanliness and comfort to many a neighbour's cottage. Her little store only amounted to three one-pound notes and a few shillings; the former she carefully wrapped up, and wrote as follows to her cousin:—

“DEAR NED,—I could not ask yer mother to send you much money now, and I think she'd just as soon, when ye come, that ye didn't mention it at all having resaved it, because it's so little, on account o' Lady-day being nigh at hand, and the rent to make up, and money not plenty; and will be glad to get ye back, and the young woman that's my cousin now, too. My aunt's angry yet, but she'll soon come about. Let me know aforehand the day we may expect ye; and, with prayers that Heaven may rain down blessings on you and yours, I rest, your sincere well-wisher and cousin,

Inside, three pounds.

LILLY O'BRIEN.”

The early grey of morning saw Lilly pattering along the seashore in search of Peggy the Fisher. This busy woman often lodged at a little cottage near the cliffs, that belonged to one Daniel M'Cleary, a man of doubtful character, as regarded the revenue. Lilly thought it not unlikely that Peggy would be there, so towards it she directed her steps. The sun had not even tinged the eastern clouds with his earliest rays, and the ocean rolled in heavy masses of leaden-coloured billows towards the shore, save where, here and

there, amid the mistiness of morning, a fantastic rock, rooted in the "vasty deep," raised its dark head, prouder even than the proud waves that foamed for a moment angrily at its base, and then passed on. The cabin she sought was so miserable that its mud walls and blackened thatch, overgrown with lichens and house-leek, were hardly distinguishable from the long fern and bulrush that grew round it; it rested against (indeed, one of its sides was part of) a huge mound of mingled rock and yellow clay; and at spring-tides the sea advanced so very near that the neighbours wondered M'Cleary remained there. There were two paths approaching this hovel—one from the country across the marshy moor that stretched in front, the other from the cliffs which partly overshadowed it. Lilly pursued the latter, but was a good deal surprised at observing a very dark cloud of smoke issuing from an aperture in the roof which constituted a chimney. She went on, looking at the smoke and endeavouring to guess its cause, when suddenly she felt her footing give way, and almost at the same moment discovered she had fallen into an excavation, not deep, but extensive. Before she had time to look around her, the exclamation of "Tunder and turf! what divil brought ye here?" from the lips of Peggy herself, astonished Lilly beyond conception. Ere she could reply, three or four wild-looking men, not one of whom she recognised, gathered round her: the red, flickering light given by a peat and furze fire and a few miserable

candles stuck without any apparent fastening against the clayey walls, the heaps of grain piled to the very roof, the blackened iron pots of all sizes, dirty tin machines, such as she had never before seen, and, above all, the smell of turf and whisky, convinced poor Lilly that she had tumbled into an illicit distillery, the existence of which, although within half a mile of her own home, she had never suspected.

"Peg, ye ould cat, ye've sould the pass on us!" exclaimed one of the men, whose bare sinewy arms and glaring eyes told both of strength and violence.

"Look out, Jack, for God's sake!" whispered another; "who knows but the young one has a troop o' red-coats at her heels!"

"Divil drive 'em!" said a ferocious-looking fellow, with a pitchfork; "we're done up fairly now, and there's nothin' for it but to skiver the both, and then jist trate 'em to a could bath this fine mornin'."

"What's the row?" inquired Daniel M'Cleary, himself coming forward. "Hey, powers above! ye ould traitor!" (turning to Peggy, who stood with her arms folded, and managed to hold her tongue for a time), "is it you that brought Miss Lilly here?—we're ruined. Och! Peggy, Peggy, to think ye'd turn informer!"

"Me—is it me?—ye lying vagabond!—Me?—Ye desERVE to be briled alive! To be scalded to death in yer own potteen 'ud be too dacent a death for ye. Me, an informer!—the back o' my hand to ye, Dan M'Cleary, for ever, Amin. As for you,

Mick Doole," and, as she spoke, she placed her arms akimbo, and advanced to the knight of the pitchfork: "you were niver good—egg nor bird—nor niver will be, plase God. And as to skivering, Mick Doole, maybe ye'll be skivered or worse, as nate as a Michaelmas goose, yerself, afore long, only I scorn to talk o' sich things. Paddy Leary! oh, it's you that's the brave man; look out for the red-coats. Ah! ah! ah! fait, and it 'ud be good fun to see that innocent young crathur marching at the head of a rigiment, after yer bits o' stills, that, it's my thought, she knew nothin' about till this blissid minit! Sure it's myself was struck, to see her tumbling upon a hape o' barley, through the black roof, like a snowball. Spake out, my lannan! Sure y' niver did that ye'd be ashamed to tell, and that's what none here can say but yerself."

"Ay," added the first speaker, "we'll listen to rason."

"For the first time in yer life, tnin," muttered Peggy.

"You gave me a letter last night," and Lilly turned to the Fisher as she spoke.

"True for ye: it was he," pointing to M'Cleary, "brought it from Watherford."

"It required a quick answer. I couldn't get John Williams to take it, by rason he doesn't go till to-morrow; and I thought that you, Peggy, 'ud be on the trot somewhere near a post, so I wrote it last night, and thinking ye'd put up at Dan

Cleary's, 'cause ye often do, I came early to try, for fear I'd miss of ye; and ill-luck sent me the cliff path, and all of a sudden I fell into this wild place—out o' which the Lord will, I hope, deliver this poor orphan in safety."

Lilly's tall, slight figure and flowing hair contrasted with the stout form of the Fisher, who stood a little in front, the rosary and a cross hanging from the arm which retained its akimbo position, while the scarlet kerchief that confined her grizzled locks fell, like a cowl, from the back of her head, and fully exposed her large bronzed features, which showed in strong relief as the light from the crackling fire flashed occasionally on them. Mick Doole, large and bony enough for one of the ancient inhabitants of the Giant's Causeway, leaning on his pitchfork, and looking as if the roof rested upon his huge black head, towering over both Paddy Leary and Daniel, who, standing at either side of the colossus, formed another group; while some three or four beings, indescribable as to shape and features, because they were covered with dirt and encompassed in an atmosphere of smoke and steam, filled up the background.

"If ye came wid a letther, where is it?" inquired one of the party.

Lilly drew it from her bosom, and presented it to the querist. He turned it over and over, and then, observing quietly, "The smoke blinds me so I can't read," handed it to Daniel M'Cleary.

"Well, that's good enough too," said Peggy. "I

niver heard tell yet of man or woman who could read widout knowing B from a bull's fut."

"It's right enough after all," observed Daniel, "for I know this is for the boy I brought the letther from—not from him straight, only from one that knows him. There's something inside it?"

The idea that M'Cleary might extract the money crossed Lilly's mind, but only for a moment, and she replied, "Yes, three pounds."

"And I'm the one that'll put it safe into Taghmon, my jewel, afore twelve this blissid day!" exclaimed Peggy, taking possession of the letter.

"Well, ye didn't go to come here as a spy, Miss Lilly, and I ax your pardon for suspecting ye; but upon my troth it's dangerous, now ye know our sacret, to let ye go. Who'll go bail for ye?"

"I will," said Peggy.

"Your bail won't do, ye cross divil," replied Paddy Leary.

"Mine will, then," said a stout, middle-sized man coming from amid the distant group. "I've been watching ye all this tin minutes, ye cowardly set—and it's no joke to be frightening the Bannow Lilly after that fashion, ye bag of weasels! My colleen never mind. Ay, whin 'rattling Jimmy' goes bail who grumbles?" Certainly they all appeared quite satisfied. "Sure," he continued, "only you've no gumption, ye'd know that the kind heart is niver mane. Why, look at her! D'ye think sich as she 'ud condescind to inform on yer potteen? Ah! ye don't know her as I do."

"I never saw ye before!" exclaimed Lilly.

"What, not the lame bocher, that had lost the use of a leg, and was blind of an eye, all from lightning on the salt sea?" and he imitated the voice and halt of a beggar to perfection. "'Twas a cold night, but ye made me very comfortable, Miss Lilly; and don't ye remimber the madman that frightened ye down the park, where ye were spreading the clothes to dry, last summer? I was sorry to frighten ye, dear; but fait, I couldn't help it, for we were wanting to get a little something, that same little sthill, past the park, and couldn't for you. So I wint mad, and frightened ye; yet—God bless ye!—ye thought I looked hungry, and so ye brought out sich a dale o' food, and laid it aside the hedge. But come along; the white rose can't blow 'mong the coorse weeds."

"Jim, Jim, ax her to promise on the Book," said Paddy.

"Ax—not I: sure the honour's in her heart's blood." And so saying, "rattling Jimmy," the smuggler and the peep-o'-day-boy, lifted Lilly kindly and respectfully out of Daniel M'Cleary's black den.

"And now," said Peggy, "I'll finish my prayers."

A fortnight had nearly elapsed, and no letter had arrived from Edward. Lilly most truly wished to leave the cottage, and urged every reason she could think of to be permitted so to do. "Miss Herriot was going for the winter to Dublin, and wanted a bettermost lady's-maid, and a little time

there would do her the world and all o' good;" or, "She had a bad cough, and it might go away if she went more up the country." But the entreaties and tears of her aunt, to whose very existence she seemed as necessary as the air she breathed, silenced her request; and she resolved to meet her relatives, however painful the meeting might be. "My aunt will get used to Lucy after a bit," thought she, "then I can go: and, anyway, he doesn't know I ever loved him; and sure it's no sin, in the sight o' God, to love him as I have loved." And Lilly was right; there was no impurity in her affection. It was the feeling that seeks the good of its object, without any reference to self. She did not regret that Edward was happy with another; nor had she, towards his wife, one jealous or unkind thought. "And sure I shall rejoice to see him happy." This was her last idea, as she rested her head on her humble pillow—and yet the morning found it wet with tears; and then she knelt, and prayed to God to bless her aunt, and Edward, and his wife, and to direct her in all her paths.

"There's one wants to spake a word to ye, Miss Lilly dear, jist down yonder," said Peggy the Fisher, as Lilly entered the garden, after breakfast, one morning.

"Who is it, Peggy?"

"Well, thin, it's jist Harry Connor. He's had a letter from Ned, and he wants to see ye on the strength of it." Peggy passed on her way, and

Lilly proceeded to the spot the Fisher had pointed out. Harry Connor was there.

"I got word from yer cousin, Lilly," said Harry, "that him and his wife are at Ballyhack, and will be here to-morrow; and they'd have come before, but Lucy (I think he calls her) has been very ill from sea-sickness; and he begged me to tell ye so. Dear Lilly, I was glad of the opportunity; for there's no getting a sight o' ye. You're always at home, and even on Sundays yer aunt goes on the car to chapel, so one can't speak to ye. Oh, Lilly! Lilly! you were not always so distant—don't you remember when I used to sit of an evening in that garden, between you and Edward, reading, and you used to call me your master, and say the time passed so happily?" Tears gathered in Lilly's eyes as she turned away her face; for she too remembered those evenings. "Lilly," continued the young man, "have you heard anything against me? Your aunt always showed me the cold shoulder—I don't blame her for that in past times; but now she would not, if you wished. Oh, do not say you cannot love me, Lilly! You have always shunned me when I wanted to spake about it; but tell me now, Lilly O'Brien! I will wait; I will do anything you wish—anything!—only say, Lilly, that you do not hate me."

"No, Harry, I do not, indeed," and she met his eye with steady firmness.

"Only one word more, and then," he continued, holding her struggling hand, "you may go. I will

wait any time you please, only say that it shan't be in vain—that you will be my wife, and make one, whose heart almost bursts at the thought of losing you, happy!”

“Harry, I cannot desave ye,” she replied, “nor would not, if I could. I know I’ve shunned ye; because I hoped that you would see why—to save us both all this heart-pain. I have always had reason to respect you—and I do; but love ye I never can: and I’ll never marry the man I cannot love.”

“Only one word,” said Harry earnestly; “sure you’ll hear me—you say you’ve a regard for me. Lilly, you go nowhere; you see no one. I do not speak of my being well-to-do in the world; but if ye were to let me near ye, to be with ye as I once was, in bygone days, the love might come. Oh, let me only try!”

“No, Harry, no; it would be useless. My heart here tells me so. You will find many fitter for ye, who can love ye as ye deserve. May the Almighty bless and watch over ye, Harry! And farewell.” The young man still grasped her hand; and, as he gazed on her beautiful face, he felt that, if it were turned from him for ever, his sun of happiness was indeed set.

“Lilly, before ye go, hear my last resolve. If ye really cast me off, I, who love ye more than life—I who, to see even the glimmer of the candle carried by this hand, have watched in rain and tempest under yon old tree—I will leave my

father's home, and for your sake, Lilly, I will take priest's vows, and forsake the world. Think well, Lilly O'Brien, if, from mere whim, or maiden modesty, you would drive me to that."

"Harry, God forbid that you should ever do so! Ye would not be fit to sarve on the altar, if for anything like that ye went there. No, Harry; my heart must go with my hand. They're all I have to give, but they must go together: even you would despise, ay, hate that hand, if ye found, for lucre, it gave itself, when the betther part was wanting."

"Lilly, maybe ye love some one else? Oh! maybe I'm proud; but surely there's not a boy all round the country could win your heart."

"I do not love any one for marriage. So, once more, God bless ye, Harry—may ye be happy—happier," she muttered to herself, "happier than I shall ever be!"

Harry stood with his eyes fixed on the spot where Lilly had disappeared. His senses were bewildered; and it was not until a smart slap on the shoulder, and the voice of the everlasting Peggy, who appeared (one would almost believe, like Sir Boyle Roche's bird, in two places at the same time) at his elbow, with her broad platter face, shaded by the fish basket, that he became fully sensible of the reality of his interview.

"Sure I tould ye ye'd get no good of the colleen; and if ye'd ha' mintioned the matther to me afore, I'd ha' tould ye the same thing, and maybe the rason too."

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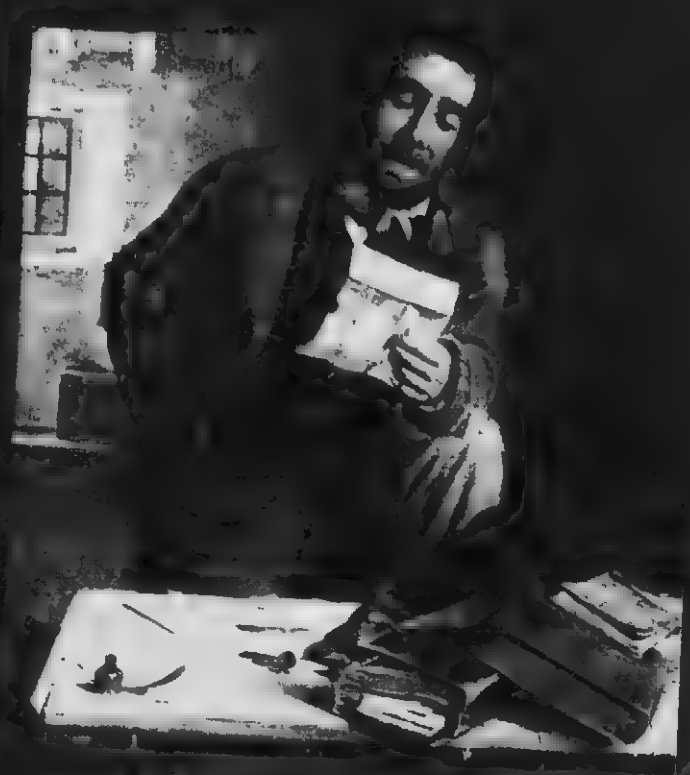
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THE LEGACY

From a Painting by
ERSKINE NICOL, R.S.A.



"I know," said Harry musingly, "she does not love any one else."

"Och, ye do, do ye?—humph, agra!"

"What do you mean, woman? Sure she told me she did not; and her lips never lied, nor never will."

"Asy!—the string o' my bades broke, and I was forced to stop to mend it jist behind that big bush o' furze. A poor creature like me can't afford to be buying bades every day. So, my dear—all accident (for I scorn a listener)—I hard what she said—'*she loved no one for marriage.*' True for her: they talk a grate dale of her sinse; but it's poor sinse to go look for the snow that fell last winter. I'll tell ye what, as a dead sacret:—she loved the ground that her cousin walked on, more than all the gould that ever was in or ever came out o' Indy. And she loves him still—ay, ye needn't look so strange; she loves him, but nothin' improper. I know that girl's heart as well as if I was inside of her—'tis of the sort that doesn't stain or spot. And now you'll see her delight 'll be to tache his wife all the ould mistress's quare ways. And thin, whin she'll have made pace intirely among 'em, she'll stae off, like the mist up the mountain, and work (and well she knows how) for his sake that doesn't know she loves him. It's mighty fine to be so romantical all for pure love. God help us, poor women, we're all tinder! It was the way wid me, whin my bachelor died—rest his sowl!—and that's the rason I'm a poor lone body now. Sure

I sould the pig my mother left me, to pay the clargy to get his sowl out o' purgatory; and wasn't it well for him to have it to depind on?"

Harry, heedless of Peggy's pathetic application of the apron to her eyes, turned towards his own home, "revolving sweet and bitter thoughts." There is a delight imparted to every unsophisticated heart by the contemplation of a noble or a virtuous action that nothing else can give; and Harry's generous mind at once acknowledged Lilly's virtues: loving at first without knowing it; feeling it unrequited; and yet resolved to benefit its object to the sacrifice of every personal convenience and prospect in life.

The next day Edward and his bride arrived at the cottage. Mrs. Cassidy, in compliance with her oath, received them kindly. The mother's heart yearned towards her son; but poor Lucy saw the old woman entertained a strong prejudice against her.

The "kindly welcome" that murmured from Lilly's lips sounded sweetly on the young stranger's ear; and as fatigue compelled her to go to bed almost immediately, Lilly's kind attentions were very delightful. The kind girl had displayed much taste and care in arranging their small sleeping-room. Every article she could spare from her own chamber was added to its furniture. And when Lucy saw everything so clean and comfortable, she expressed both surprise and pleasure.

It was impossible not to love Lucy when you looked at her; but it was somewhat doubtful if that sentiment would continue when you knew her. Her eyes were black, quick, and quite as likely to sparkle with anger as with pleasure. She was very petite, lively, thoughtless, and possessed precisely those acquirements that were useless in an Irish cottage. The daughter of a grocer in Plymouth, she had seen, fallen in love, ran away with, and married Edward in the short space of three weeks; and had not yet numbered sixteen years. Her youth pleaded strongly in her favour; but her extreme giddiness kept Lilly—the sweet, the patient Lilly—perpetually on the watch, lest she might do something to annoy her mother-in-law. It is true she quilled Mrs. Cassidy's caps in so new and bewitching a style that everybody said Lucy made the good lady look ten years younger. She washed her old mode cloak in some stuff, of which whisky and beer were the principal ingredients, and made it appear, to the astonishment of the whole parish, "bran-new." Then she trimmed bonnets—one yard and a half of riband managed by her went as far as three and a quarter ('tis an absolute fact) with anybody else. She could work natural flowers upon gauze, and embroider the corners of pocket-handkerchiefs. She could even get up fine linen: but she could neither spin flax nor wool, nor card, nor milk, nor churn, nor cram fowl, nor make butter, nor a shirt nor shift of any description. The worst of all was,

she had said, unfortunately, that she was certain no Christian body could eat bread made from the flour that was pounded out by those dirty stones; thus bringing Mrs. Cassidy's invaluable quern into contempt. Then it was quite impossible to keep her quiet; everything excited her risibility. One day in particular, when the turkey-cock, affronted at Mrs. Cassidy's scarlet petticoat, which outvied his own red neck, picked unmercifully at her legs, Lucy only laughed, and never went to the rescue, which induced the old lady to say that "Ned pretended to bring home a wife, but had only brought home a doll."

Lilly might well be called her guardian angel: when, like a schoolgirl, she scampered over the fields, gathering flowers, or hunting every cock, hen, and chicken over the potato ridges, Lilly followed to prevent her over-fatiguing herself, and to assist her home. Then she would instruct her how to please her mother-in-law; and, if Mrs. Cassidy complained, Lilly had always some remark to soften down what was said. Her general apology was, "She's so young; but she'll soon be a mother, and then she'll get sense."

"I wonder Ned did not fall in love with you, Lilly," said Lucy, one day. "I'm sure you'd have made a better wife for him than ever I shall!" How poor Lilly blushed, and then turned pale; but Lucy heeded it not. "How industrious Ned grows!—Well, they would not believe in Plymouth that he'd ever settle down into a farmer, but I'm sure he works in the fields from morning till night."

"People who are not rich must work, Lucy."

"Now, Lilly, that's a hit at me, who let you do everything. But do not look so angry with me, dearest Lilly. I beg pardon: you never hit at anybody. Oh, you are not like an Irishwoman!"

"Oh, Lucy dear! don't be after talking that way o' the country afore my aunt, for it hurts her; and ye must remimber how much she's thought of in the parish."

"Well, there, I'll be as good as gold—there!" and she sat down to work at some caps for a little stranger that was expected soon.

Edward was very affectionate to his young wife, although her heedlessness often annoyed him; but when he gazed on her fairy-like beauty he forgave it. The Protestant church was too far for her to walk; she could not go to mass, and her husband loved her too well to permit her to be teased on the subject. Her mother-in-law, and even Lilly, were grieved at this, and lamented that she thought so little about serious things. However, Mrs. Cassidy always reconciled it to herself by saying, "Niver mind; she'll be all the asier brought round to the right way by and by." But, of all the amusements in which the thoughtless creature delighted, nothing pleased her so much as boating: if she could even get into a boat by herself, she would paddle it round the creeks, and into the bays, which in some places are overhung by scowling rocks, where the sea-birds nestle in safety.

"The potatoes are almost done, by their bubbling,

I suppose, Lilly," said she one day, "so I'll go and meet Ned as he comes from the plough, and we shall be just in time for dinner," and away she tripped, singing as blithely as a lark.

"She has a light heart," thought Lilly; "and why not?—mine is not as heavy as it used to be. Well, thank God, it does make people happy to do their duty," and she assisted the little serving-girl in arranging all things in their kitchen—a task soon performed. The potatoes, laughing and smoking, were poured out on a clean home-bleached cloth, and the white noggins frothed with fresh buttermilk of Lilly's own churning. Something prepared with extra care, for the delicate English-woman, was covered between two delf plates at the fire, and Mrs. Cassidy stood watching at the door, her hand lifted to her eyes, to shade them from the noonday sun, while Lilly mixed some gooseberry wine with water and sugar for Lucy.

"Lilly, didn't ye say that Lucy went to meet Ned?"

"Yes, aunt."

"Well, here's Ned at the gate almost, and no sign o' Lucy."

"That's mighty strange," replied Lilly, advancing. "Ned, where's Lucy?"

"At her dinner, I suppose."

"Now, don't be so foolish. I'm sure she met ye."

"She did not, indeed, and I was longing to see her."

"It is some of her childish tricks," said Mrs. Cassidy.

"Her dinner'll be stone cold, though," said Lilly, looking out, "so I'll jist go see if I can meet her; and sit ye all down, or the pratees'll not be fit to ate," and she issued forth without further parley.

Ned did not sit down, although his mother urged him. "Her dinner has nothing to do with yours, Ned; sure Lilly has something nice under the plate for her. No sign of her yet," she continued, after a pause; "sure she wouldn't be so foolish as to go to Tim Lavery's boat for a bit of a spree. I caught her in it reading yesterday, but it was anchored safe, sure enough."

Ned made no reply, but followed the footsteps of his cousin. The field he had been ploughing was very near the beach; he hastily gained it, and his horror and dismay can be better conceived than expressed when, gaining the cliff, the first object he beheld was Lilly, half in and half out of the water, dragging to shore the apparently lifeless body of his wife. When Lilly left the cottage, she first looked behind the large furze and hawthorn bushes near the field, and then the boat occurred to her. She sped to the sea, and saw it in shallow water, but upset, with Lucy clinging to the stern, faint and exhausted. To plunge into the water and bring her inland was the work but of a moment, and done before Edward could descend the cliffs.

The thoughtless creature was soon conveyed

home. Her nerves were quite shattered. She clung closely to Lilly's bosom, like a frightened child, and did not even return her husband's caresses. She was hardly laid on her bed when shrieks of agony succeeded the half-murmured words and sobbings of terror; and, after long and painful suffering, the being who, not many hours before, had bounded in the full light and life of early youth, gave premature birth to a living child, and then yielded up her own existence. It was very sorrowful to mark the merry eyes closed for ever beneath their alabaster lids, and the long black lashes resting on her colourless cheeks.

Then came a long and loud debate between the Protestant and Catholic priests as to who was to perform the last rites—as if the spirit's happiness depended on man's words repeated over inanimate clay. The widower roused himself from the lethargy that succeeds the first rush of impetuous grief, and said, calmly but firmly, "Plase your reverences, I'm a Catholic, and ever was and will be; but she that's gone from me was born a Protestant, married a Protestant, and, as she died one, so shall she be buried, and that's enough. And what's more, I promised her, when I didn't think that death and desolation would come at this time, that if the child was a girl, it should go wid her; if a boy, wid me. Now, gentlemen, I'm not a larned man, but my mind is, that a promise to the dead or the living is holy and firm in its natur'; and so, as I promised it shall be. I couldn't look upon the babby's face

for a king's ransom, nor do I know whether it be boy or girl. Mother, say what is it?"

"A girl," replied Mrs. Cassidy.

"Well, maybe more betther. Maybe you'd just baptize it, Mr. Barlow, and Lilly and my mother'll stand for it; as my notion is it can't live—and why should it?"

But the little Lucy did live—thanks to Lilly's fostering care; and so fragile a thing it was that even a rough kiss might have killed it. A nurse was immediately procured, and Lilly had the satisfaction of seeing all Mrs. Cassidy's solicitude directed towards the infant; nay, she almost forgot the quern, and the only danger was that the child would be destroyed by kindness. There was, however, to Lilly's delicate mind, something most improper in her remaining in the same house with her cousin. He was again free. Although she hoped that he did not suspect her love, yet he knew of his mother's old plan,—he had once, in anger, reproached her as being accessory to it,—and Lilly decided on leaving our village. Edward, since sorrow had laid her hand on him, was an altered man, and Mrs. Cassidy was enjoying a vigorous old age: so she could leave her, assured of happiness. It was a bitter trial to forsake her little godchild, yet she felt she owed a duty to herself. Mr. Herriott's family were again about to visit Dublin, and, without imparting her plan to any one, she offered her services to Miss Herriott. They were joyfully accepted, not without many

expressions of wonder that "the Bannow Lilly," the flower of the whole countryside, should leave a spot where she was so much beloved. Lilly pleaded a wish for improvement, and finally arranged to set off with Miss Herriott in three days. As she returned she heard Peggy's loud voice, singing her old favourite, "The Colleen Rue." Just as she got to her favourite stanza—

"I ranged through Asia—likewise Arabia,
Through Penselvanie, a-seeking for you ;
Through the burning region of the siege of Paris"—

she espied Lilly dressed in her decent mourning habit.

"The blessing be about ye, my precious!—and maybe ye'd tell us where ye've been. Sorra a bit o' news going now for a poor body."

"I've been up to Mrs. Herriott's, Peggy."

"Och! they're going to Dublin, all the way, on Tuesday. Sure that'll be the black journey for the poor. You needn't care, Miss Lilly; sure you've full and plinty, and an own fireside."

"I'm going as own maid with Miss Herriott, Peggy—there's a small taste of news for yer comfort," continued Lilly, smiling; "and more betokens, you've the first of it, for I've not told my aunt yet."

"You going? Och, oh, oh!—don't be making yer fun of us after that fashion; we know betther nor that."

"It's quite true, for all ye may think, and so God

be wid ye, Peggy! You and poor Coal will often cross my mind when I'm alone among strangers."

"Arrah, now, stop!—sure ye can't be in arnist. Sure there's not a living soul in the parish but says you'll be married to Ned now; and at St. Pathrick's sure I heard 'em talking about it; and how Harry Connor's priested—sure he's Father Harry for your sake."

"Peggy, I take shame to myself for hearkenning to your palaver for a moment: dacent talk ye have, and the young grass not green on *her* grave yet! Once more I say, God be wid ye." "I have done right," thought she, "but I shall not be able to make my dear aunt think so."

Poor Mrs. Cassidy scolded and cried with might and main; and Ned remonstrated, and even said that he took it very unkind of her to leave them, and, above all, the little thing whose life she had saved. But Lilly was firm, and departed amid the reproaches and tears of her aunt, and the heartfelt regret of her neighbours.

How very irksome were her employments!—how did she shrink from the rude gaze of gentlemen and gentlemen's gentlemen, who, astonished at her beauty, paid homage by staring her out of countenance!—and how often did she long for the quiet of the lowly cottage in the isolated village of Bannow! At first she imagined that city people must be very superior to country ones. But she soon grew tired of the pert flippancy and foolish airs of the servants she met; and by Miss Herriott's permission, retired,

when unoccupied, to the solitude of her kind lady's dressing-room. She received letters once a month generally, from her cousin. The two first, in addition to the necessary information, anxiously entreated her return; but latterly (for the stay of the family was prolonged, owing to Mrs. Herriott's illness) the subject was never mentioned; and the bitter feeling that there no longer existed any one to love her, weighed heavily on her heart. Sixteen months had elapsed since Lucy's death, and Edward ever spoke of his child with all a father's fondness. Lilly longed to see it, but she had resolved on never again living with her aunt—and she remained firm to her resolution.

She had been dressing her young lady one morning when, passing downstairs, the footman said, "There's one in the housekeeper's room that wants ye." She hardly entered when she was almost suffocated by the embraces of Mrs. Cassidy; and then she had to encounter the respectful but affectionate greetings of her cousin. Her aunt earnestly looked at her, would not sit down, but said, "Now, my darlint Lilly, it is much ye ought to thank me for this journey—in my ould age to take to the road agin; but ye see the rason is, that Ned is tired o' being bachelor, and he's going to change his condition, and jist wants to ax your advice and consint."

"Mine!"

"Now, mother dear, don't be mumming," said Ned. "Lilly, I come to ax ye to accept the hand

of one who is unworthy to be yer husband, but yet would die to make you happy. Lilly, don't cast me off—for my mother's sake, for my own, for this one's sake!"—and he took from the arms of our old friend, Peggy the Fisher, a smiling, black-eyed little creature, who almost instantly nestled its curly pate in Lilly's bosom. "Sure ye can make us all happy, if ye like; and we'll be all in quiet Bannow agin. Say, I illy! Oh, don't look so could on me!"

"Will ye hould your whisht, Ned!" interrupted Peggy. "If ever I see'd anybody trated in this mis-mannerly fashion! Can't ye see wid half an eye that the cratur's as good as fainted, ye omathawn! No wonder, and ye both bellowing thegither. Ye don't know how to make a dacent proposhal; ye've frightened the grawl betwixt ye. Whisht, honey, whisht!" (to the child)—"there's a woman! Ay—come to your own Peggy, that's hushowed ye oft; and will agin, by the blessin' o' God."

Lilly, literally unable to stand, sat into the housekeeper's chair. Edward knelt at her side; and his mother, holding one of her hands to her heart, looked earnestly on her face; while Peggy, "hushowing" the child, was not an uninterested spectator.

"God knows," said the young woman, after a little time, "I did not expect this. Aunt, when I had no father to protect me—no mother to feel for me—you did both: you shared with me what you had; and oh! what was more than all—while I ate o' yer bread, and drank o' yer cup, ye never made

me feel that it was not my father's roof that sheltered me. Ned, we grew together: and you were to me as a born brother. But ye wronged me, Ned, that night—the first time (and God, that hears me, knows it), the first time I ever guessed my aunt wished me to be nearer to her than her brother's child; that night, when, to prevint yer laving home, I proposed to quit for ever my only frind; when I did her bidding, an' followed ye through the moonlight, to bring ye back to yer poor ould mother, ye cast a black word in my face, and ye said that I—I, Lilly O'Brien—was leagued agin ye—and that I followed ye to get a husband." She covered her face with her hands, and faintly continued: "I have never forgotten it; I have prayed to do so. No one ever knew it but Peggy—she overheard it. Oh! it weighed here, at the very bottom of my heart; and when I slept, it was wid me; it——"

"Oh, Lilly, how can ye take on so!—Sure it was the bad temper that did it, and I didn't mane it. And sure you've proved since that it's little truth was in it. Sure you've been more like an angel than anything else; and sure when I ax yer pardon——"

"Stop, Ned: ye do *now*; but maybe, by an' by, ye might say the same thing agen; and if ye did it, and if we were married, I could never look up after!"

"Why, Lilly," said Mrs. Cassidy, "ye're making him out a fair black villain, after all yer goodness, to think he'd do the likes o' that—after yer coming

over me, to take an oath *to resave him and his as my own*, whin a word was only wanting to make me ban him for iver."

"And after her flying at me like a mad cat," echoed Peggy, "becase I gave her a bit of advice (for I was fairly bothered) to take care of a little property for herself."

"Ay, and all her attintion to the stranger," resumed Mrs. Cassidy.

"And her sinding him her own three pounds to bring him home," said Peggy.

"How do you know that?" inquired Lilly.

"Is it how I know it? Why, thin, I'll jist tell ye. I know yer aunt hadn't a tester in the house, becase she'd given me every pinny to exchange for gould, that she might pay her rint in it—not in dirty paper—to plase the landlord."

"Yer good deeds are all known, Lilly. Oh, let me say, *my* Lilly. Sure ye'll forgive yer cousin. How can I admire ye as I ought?—Don't shake yer head, Lilly dear—but——"

The opening of the door prevented the conclusion of Edward's speech; and Miss Herriott entered, her face radiant with satisfaction. "So, Lilly, I am to lose you! Nay, do not talk, girl. I know you love him; I knew it all along. Peggy told me all about it, at the end of the shrubbery, the night before we left Bannow; and my dressmaker has made the wedding-dress, because Edward Cassidy wrote to me, and asked my opinion and consent: which was fitting; and I assured him you had not been flirting

with any one, and invited him and my old friend up to Dublin. As to you, Peggy, I never expected you, but you are not less welcome."

"Why, I thank ye, Miss, my lady. I jist came to see how ye all war, and to mind the child, and to look at the fine beautiful city, and the college, th t bates the world for larning, as I have heard, and the ancient ould Parliament-house; and thin go back, and give rest to my bones among my own people. But I hope ye'll persuade Miss Lilly, my lady, for her own good. Sure they love each other—and what's more wanting for happiness?"

"Ay, do, Miss. She'll do yer bidding, maybe; she's forgotten mine," and tears rolled down the wrinkled cheeks of Mrs. Cassidy.

"Not so," replied Miss Herriott; and taking Lilly's hand, she placed it in Edward's. "And now," continued the amiable girl, "kneel for the blessing that ascends to the throne of the Almighty like a sweet-smelling savour—the blessing of an honest parent." They dropped on their knees, and Mrs Cassidy pressed them to her satisfied heart.

"And sure that's as good as a play," blubbered Peggy.

"Well, Peggy, you shall see a play, if you please, to-morrow evening; but first I invite you to Lilly's wedding, which will take place to-morrow at four o'clock, in our great drawing-room, agreeably to the forms of the Catholic church, by a Catholic priest. Nay, Lilly, it is the last time I shall ever command you; so I bid you all farewell for the present."

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BOTHERED

From a Painting by
ERSKINE NICOL, R.S.A.



And the good, and kind, and generous young lady left them to their "own company": which, it is scarcely necessary to say, was not very doleful or wretched; for although the heart of one of the party was too full for words, ample amends was made for her silence by the ever-talkative Peggy.

At three-quarters of an hour past three (I love to be exact in these matters), Miss Herriott inspected her company in the back drawing-room. The arrangements for the ceremony highly amused her. First, Mrs. Cassidy, in an open rose-coloured poplin dress, as stiff as buckram, with tight sleeves reaching to the elbows, where they were met by white mittens, that had been the gift of Miss Herriott's grandmother, and which the old lady prized so highly that they had only twice seen the light in twenty years; a blue satin quilted petticoat, ditto, ditto; a white muslin apron flounced all round; high-heeled shoes, with massy silver buckles; a clean kerchief, pinned in the fashion that used to be called "pigeon's craw," and a high-cauled cap, trimmed with rich lace, completed her costume. Peggy sported a large flowered chintz, whereon pink parrots, yellow goldfinches, and bunches of roses bigger than either goldfinch or parrot, clustered together in open defiance of nature and the arts: this was made after Mrs. Cassidy's pattern, and displayed to advantage a pea-green English stuff petticoat, quilted in diamonds. There was little variation from Mrs. Cassidy's fashion in the other *et ceteras*, except that Peggy wore a flaming yellow

silk shawl, with a blue border, that, to use her own expression, "matched everything."

Lilly looked beautiful—most beautiful. Miss Herriott dressed her as she pleased: in white—pure white; would not permit her to wear a cap, but let her hair curl after its own fashion, only confining it with a wreath of lilies of the valley.

There is no use in describing Edward's dress; all bridegrooms, I believe, wear blue coats with yellow buttons and white waistcoats. The little Lucy had a clean white frock, and a lobster's claw to keep her quiet.

Oh, what a happy group of humble people were assembled in that gay drawing-room! Mrs. Cassidy—the desire of her heart gratified, the hope of years realised, the fervent and continual prayer answered—Mrs. Cassidy was, beyond doubt, the happiest of them all, as she sat, with her cheerful and grateful face, contemplating her "two children."

"Ye're both too handsome and too good for me," whispered Ned, as he conducted Lilly to the great drawing-room, closely followed by her condescending bridemaids. Lilly curtesied as she entered, but did not look off the ground until an exclamation of surprise from the bridegroom roused her attention, and she saw—Harry Connor!—Father Harry!—ready to perform the marriage ceremony.

"It is even your old friend," said he, advancing. "Mr. Herriott, at my request, consented to my surprising you. Ned, when I give you this girl as your wife, I give you one whom no earthly feeling

could tempt from the path of strict honour. She told me once that her hand should never go without her heart, and your being together proves you have it. A blessing will she be to thee, my early friend." A single tear glistened on his cheek as he pronounced the words that made them husband and wife—it was a tear of which a seraph might not have been ashamed.

Four years have passed since that happy marriage; and can you not tell who—seeking to abstract herself from household cares and blessings, only that she may render grateful homage to her Creator—sits after evening vespers, with clasped hands and downcast eyes, her national hood shading, but not obscuring, the beauty of her pensive face, near yonder cottage, that looks so joyously in the setting sun which sheds such glorious light over the ocean, that reflects every passing cloud upon its calm, clear bosom? See her again, within the porch of her dwelling, where the flowers are blossoming, and where she has other blossoms than the flowers give. She is approaching the bloom of womanhood; yet grace is in all her movements. Her kerchief is carefully pinned across her bosom, and two or three rich auburn tresses, that obstinately come forth, and will not be confined by the neat cap of snowy whiteness, move in the passing breeze. That dark-eyed and dark-haired little girl, buoyant and animated, cannot be her child: yet it clings to her neck, and calls her "mother."

There—the honest farmer, returning from his toil, is met by two almost infant prattlers,—the youngest a perfect specimen of childish helplessness and beauty,—and peering from the window is the hardly altered face of—Mrs. Cassidy.

Oh, that voice!—It is Peggy's—old Peggy—as she is still called, “Peggy the Fisher.” She has “a good penny o’ money of her own,” and sometimes visits around the neighbourhood: but she is so strongly attached to the family to whom the cottage belongs that she almost resides there.

“Och, ye craturs, like fairy things, come in to the tay!—Sure it’s not fit for the likes o’ ye to be muddling in the grass, even after yer daddy, ye born blossoms!—ye bames o’ joy!—ye comforts o’ the ould’ooman’s heart!—Come, all o’ ye, to your own Peggy. Och! ’tis myself must set about, fair and asy, to make my sowl, and not be passing my time, like the flowers in May, wid the young blossoms of
THE BANNOW LILLY.”

“TAKE IT ASY”

“All ye can do with him, Aileen, when he gets into those humours, is—to take it asy.”

“Take it *asy*, indeed!” repeated the pretty bride, with a toss of her head and a curl of her lip; “it’s asy to say take it asy. I’m sure if I had thought Mark was so passionate, I’d have married Mike!”

“But Mike was mighty dark,” replied old aunt Alice, with a mysterious shake of her head.

“Well, so he was: but then I might have had Matthew.”

“Ah! ah!” laughed old Alice; “he was the worst bird of the nest! Look, ye can wind Mark round yer finger, as I wind this worsted thread—if ye’ll only *take it asy*.”

“Oh! I wish, I wish I had known before that men were so ill-contrived! I’d have died sooner than have married,” sobbed Aileen; who, to confess the truth, had been so much petted by the neighbours, on account of her beauty, that it would have required a large proportion of love, and a moderate allowance of wisdom, to change the village coquette into a sober wife.

“Ah, whisht, avourneen!” said Alice. “Sure I

tould ye all along. 'Mark,' says I, 'is all fire and tow—but it's out in a minute; Mike is *dark*, and deep as the bay of Dublin; and Matthew is all to the bad intirely.' You've got the best of the three. And ye can manage him just as the south wind that's blowing now manages the thistle-down that's floating through the air—if *ye'll take it asy*."

At first Aileen pouted, then she sat down to her wheel; was too much out of temper to do what she was doing well—broke her thread—pushed it from her; took up her knitting—dropped the stitches—shook the needles—and, of course, dropped some more.

"*Take it asy*," said aunt Alice, looking at her, over her spectacles.

Aileen flung the knitting away, clasped her arms round her aunt's neck, rested her head on her bosom, and wept outright.

"Let's go into the garden, sit under the ould lime tree, and watch the bees that are near swarming," observed aunt Alice, "and we'll talk yer trouble over, avourneen. It's very sorry I am to see ye taking on so for a thrifle, at the first going off. But you'll know better by-'n-by, when real troubles come."

Poor Aileen, like all young people, thought her troubles were very real. Observing the bees more than usually busy, she muttered, "I wonder, aunt, you don't tell the bees to take it asy."

"So I would, dear, if I saw them quarrelling: but they are too wise to quarrel among themselves, whatever they do with *furriners*. They fly together,

live together, sing together, work together, and have but the one object and aim in life. Ah, then, many's the good lesson we may learn from the bees, besides that which teaches us bring all that's good and useful to our own homes." The old woman paused, and then added, "Sit ye down here, my child, and listen to what I'm going to tell ye. Ye know well, avourneen, I was lawfully married, first, by ould Father John, to Richard Mulvaney—my heart's first love he was; heaven be his bed this blessed day, and grant we may meet above the world and its real troubles! Aileen, it was, indeed, a trouble to see my brave, young, handsome husband dragged out of the blue waters of the Shannon; to find that, when I called, he could not answer; when I wept, he could not comfort: that my cheek rested for hours on his lips, and he did not kiss it; and that never more, in this world, would I hear his sweet and loving voice!"

Fourscore years and five had passed over the head of that woman, and her age was as beautiful, according to its beauty, as had been her youth. She had been married three times; yet her eyes filled with tears at the remembrance of the love and sorrow of her early days, and it was some time before she could continue.

"Well, dear, one day Richard and I had some little tiff, and I said more than I ought to have said. And it was, by the same token, a fine midsummer morning. I strayed out to our garden, and picked up a shiny snail; and as I looked at the snail, I re-

membered how, the last midsummer day, I had put just such another between two plates, and sat for an hour by the rising sun, with the forefinger of my left hand crossed over the forefinger of my right hand; and then, as thrue as life, when I lifted the plate, the thing had marked as purty an R and a piece of as beautiful an M as the schoolmaster himself could write upon the plate. And I cried to remember how glad I was then, and how sad now; and at last I cried myself to sleep. Alanna machree! I was little more than a child—not all out sixteen. Well, dear, in my drame, I suppose I must call it, I saw the beautifulest fairy (the Lord save us!)—the very handsomest of the good people that ever the eyes of woman looked upon—a little deeshy-dawshy craythur, footing it away all round the blossom of a snow-white lily: now twirling round upon the tip of her tiny toe; then, as if she was joining hands round, down the middle and up again, to the tune of the ‘Rakes of Mallow.’”

“The ‘Rakes of Mallow’!” exclaimed Aileen.

“The ‘Rakes of Mallow’!” repeated Alice solemnly. “I heard it as plain as I hear the rising march of the bees at this blessed minute. Well, of a sudden, she made a spring, and stood upright as a dart upon the green and goulden crown, in the very midst of the flower, and pushed back her ringlets, and settled her dress at a pocket looking-glass not so big as a midge’s wing. Then, all in a minute, she looked at me and said, ‘I don’t like the sight of a wet eye—what ails ye, young woman?’”

"Well, to be sure, my heart came to my lips; but I had too much manners not to answer the great lady; and, 'Madam,' said I, 'my eyes would be as dry, though not so bright as yer honour's, if it wasn't for my husband, who wants to have a way and a will of his own.'

"'It's the way with all the men, my own husband into the bargain,' says the queen, for she was no less; 'and there's no use fighting for the upper hand,' says the queen, 'for both the law and the prophets are against us in that; and if it comes to open war,' says the queen, 'we get the worst of it: if your husband falls into a bad temper, or a queer temper,—if he is cross, or unkind, or odd,—take it asy,' says the queen, 'even if he does not come round at once. This quiet way of yours will put you in his heart, or him at your feet—which is pretty much the same thing—at last: gentleness does wonders for us women in Fairy-land. It has great strength intirely, in the hands of a purty woman—and you are very purty for a mortal,' says she again, looking at me through the eye of a heart's-ease, which she wore about her neck for a quizzing-glass.

"'I thank you, my sweet and beautiful lady,' says I, 'for your compliment.'

"'Ah! ah!' and she laughed, and her laugh was full of joy and hope, like the music of the priest's own silver bell. 'It's no harm,' she continued, 'if now and then you give him a taste of that which makes your eyes so bright and your cheeks so red, just now.'

"'What's that, madam?' says I.

"'Flattery,' says she. 'Make a man, be he fairy or be he mortal, pleased with himself, and he is sure to be pleased with you.' And then she laughed again. 'Whatever he says or does,' says her majesty, while she was getting into a goulden saddle, on the back of a great dragon-fly, dressed in a beautiful jacket and gown of green velvet, with a silver riding-whip in her hand, 'take it asy,' says she; and I heard her laugh and sing when she was out of sight, and her sweet voice shook a shower of white rose-leaves, from a bush, on my face. And when I awoke, I saw the wisdom of her words, and I kept them close in my own bosom; and often, when I'd be just going to make a sharp answer to him I loved, I'd think of the fairy's word, and the evil would pass from my heart and lips without a sound—no one the worse for it, and I all the better. And sure Richard used to say I was like an angel to him. Poor fellow! he was soon to be taught the differ, for the angels took him from me in earnest!

"After a couple of years I married again. I've no reason to fault the second I had; though he was not gentle, like him who sighed out his soul in the blue waters: he was dark, and would not tell what offended him. Well, I'd have given the world to have had some one to whom I could make a clean breast; but I had none; and, somehow, I again sat in the same spot, at the same time—again slept—and again saw the same one of the good people. I did not think her honour was as gay as she had

been, and I wondered in my heart if she, too, had taken a second husband. It would not have been manners for me to spake first, but she was as free as ever.

"Well," she says, looking at me, 'you've tried another; but though you have not forgotten my advice, you do not follow it.'

"Oh, my lady, plase yer majesty," says I, 'the tempers of the two do so differ!' and I thought with the words my heart would break: for the moment poor Richard's humour was out, it was off; but James would sulk and sulk, like a bramble under the shade of an oak: and the fairy read my thoughts as if they were an open ballad. 'This one is dark, my lady, and gets into the sulks, and is one that I can't manage, good or bad; not all as one as it was with my first husband, plase yer majesty; for when we had a tiff, it was soon over—God help me, so it used to be; but this one sits in a corner, and never speaks a word, not even to the cat.'

"Ah," said she, 'they are different; but the rule holds good—gentle and simple—hot and cold—old and young—you must take them asy, or you'll never be asy yourself. Let a passionate temper cool; don't blow upon it—a breath may ruffle a lake, and kindle a fire. Let a sulky temper alone, it is a standing pool; the more it is stirred, the more it will offend.' I try to talk her fine English, Aileen, but it bothers me," continued old Alice. "Well, the end of it was, that she finished as before,

by telling me to *take it asy*; which, after that, I did; and I must say that James's last breath was spent in blessing me. Well, dear, Miles Pendergrast was rich, and I was poor; he wanted a mother for five children and a servant for himself, and he took me. This was the worst case of the three. There was a great deal of love—young, fresh, heart-sweet love to the first; and more than is going, in general, to the second: but oh, my grief! there was *none* to the third. Oh, but marriage to a woman without love! what is it? Where love is, it is even pleasant to bear a harsh word or look—a satisfaction that you can show your love, by turning bitter to sweet. Service is no service then—his voice is your music—his very shadow on the ground yer brightest sunshine!"

"Aunt," said Aileen, "you did not think that with the first, at the time, or you would not have wanted the good people's advice."

"True for ye, avourneen: we never value the sunbeams so much as in the dark of the moonless night; we never value a friend's advice until he is beyond our reach; we never prize the husband's love, or the mother's care, until the grave has closed over them; and when we seek them there the grass that we weep over is green, the mallow and the dock have covered the cross or the headstone, and the red earth-worms we have disturbed bring us no message."

"I don't want to hear any more, aunt," said Aileen, pained by the picture her aunt had drawn;

"now I'll own to the first of the quarrel, and the last word of it, if Mark will confess to the middle."

"Let a quarrel alone, when once it's over," interrupted her aunt. "A quarrel, darlint, is like buttermilk—when once it is out of the churn, the more you shake it, the more sour it grows."

"And must I say nothing when he comes home?"

"Oh yes; say, 'Mark, my heart's delight!'"

"Oh, aunt, that would never do!"

"Well, if ye're ashamed to say what you feel, a smile and a kiss will do as well. And a smile and a kiss will work wonders, darling, if the heart goes with them; but if they are only given because they're dutiful gifts, ah! they fall like a snow-wreath upon the spring-flower, chilling and crushing, instead of warming and cheering. Not but duty's a fine thing; but it's dark and heavy to a married woman when there is no back of love to it."

"Did the fairy queen give you the same advice the third time?" said the bride, blushing like Aurora at Alice's counsel; "for I suppose you saw her the third time——"

"I must say, achora, she wasn't so civil to me the last time as she was the first and second," answered the old dame, bridling. "She tould me I wasn't as purty as I used to be—that was true enough, to be sure, only one never likes to hear it; she tould me that, when the bloom of a woman's cheek fades, the bloom of her heart ought to

increase; she talked a deal, that I did not quite understand, about men making laws and breaking them; and how every one has a thorn of some kind or other to bear with: she told me how hard it was to find three roses in a garden all of the same shape, colour, and scent, and how could I expect three good husbands? She said that, as I had borne my crown, I must bear my cross; she was hard enough upon me; but the winding-up of her advice to me, in all my troubles, was to take it asy; she said she had been married herself more than five hundred years."

"The ould craythur! and to talk of your not having been so purty as you were!" said Aileen.

"Hush, avourneen! Sure they have the use of the May-dew before it falls, and the colour of the lilies and the roses before it's folded in the tender buds; and can steal the notes out of the birds' throats while they sleep."

"And still," exclaimed Aileen, half pouting, "the best advice they can give to a married woman, in her trouble, is—to take it asy!"

"It's a sensible saying, if properly thought of," said old Alice, "and will bring peace, if not love, at the last. If we can't get rid of our troubles, it's wise to TAKE THEM ASY."

MASTER BEN

TALL and gaunt and stately was "Master Ben," with a thin sprinkling of white mingled with the slightly curling brown hair that shaded a forehead high and somewhat narrow. With all my partiality for this very respectable personage, I must confess that his physiognomy was neither handsome nor interesting; yet there was a calm and gentle expression in his pale grey eyes that told of much kind-heartedness—even to the meanest of God's creatures. His steps were strides; his voice shrill, like a boatswain's whistle; and his learning—prodigious!—the unrivalled dominion of the country for five miles round was Master Ben.

Although the cabin of Master Ben was built of the blue shingle, so common along the eastern coast of Ireland, and was perched, like the nest of a hawk, on one of the highest crags in the neighbourhood of Bannow; although the aforesaid Master Ben, or (as he was called by the gentry) "Mister Benjamin," had worn a long black coat for a period of fourteen years—in summer, as an open surtout, which flapped heavily in the gay sea breeze—and in winter, firmly secured, by a

large wooden pin, round his throat—the dominie was a person of much consideration, and more loved than feared, even by the little urchins who often felt the effects of his “system of education.” Do not, therefore, for a moment, imagine that his was one of the paltry hedge-schools, where all the brats contribute their “sod o’ turf,” or “their small trifle o’ pratees,” to the schoolmaster’s fire or board. No such thing;—though I confess that “Mister Benjamin” would, occasionally, accept “a hand of pork,” a kreen, or even a kish of turf, or three or four hundred of “white eyes,” or “London ladies,” if they were presented, in a proper manner, by the parents of his favourite pupils.

In summer, indeed, he would, occasionally, lead his pupils into the open air, permitting the biggest of them to bring his chair of state; and while the fresh ocean breeze played around them, he would teach them all he knew—and that was not a little; but usually he considered his lessons more effectual when they were learned under his roof; and it was, in truth, a pleasing sight to view his cottage assemblage, on a fresh summer morning;—such rosy, laughing, romping things! “The juniors,” with their rich curly heads, red cheeks, and bright, dancing eyes, seated in tolerably straight lines—many on narrow strips of blackened deal—the remnants, probably, of some shipwrecked vessel—supported at either end by fragments of grey rock; others on portions of the rock itself, that Master Ben used to say “though not very asy to sit

upon for the gossoons, were clane, and not much trouble." "The seniors," fine, clever-looking fellows, intent on their sum.s or copies—either standing at, or leaning on, the blotted "desks" that extended along two sides of the schoolroom, kitchen, or whatever you may please to call so purely Irish an apartment: the chimney admitted a large portion of storm or sunshine, as might chance; but the low wooden partition, which divided this useful room from the sleeping part of the cabin, at once told that Master Ben's dwelling was of a superior order.

At four the dominie always dismissed his assembly, and heart-cheering was the joy that succeeded. On the long summer evenings the merry groups would scramble down the cliffs—which in many places overhang the wide-spreading ocean—heedless of danger—

"And jump, and laugh, and shout, and clap their hands
In noisy merriment."

The seniors then commenced lobster and crab-hunting, and often showed much dexterity in hooking the gentlemen out of their rocky nests with a long, crooked stick of elder, which they considered "lucky." The youngers were generally content with shrimping, or knocking the limpets—or, as they call them, the "branyans"—off the rocks; while the wee-wee ones slyly watched the ascent of the razor-fish, whose deep den they easily discovered by its tiny mountain of sand.

Even during their hours of amusement Master Ben was anxious for their welfare, and, enthroned on a high pinnacle that commanded a boundless view of the wide-spreading sea, with its numerous creeks and bays, he would patiently sit, hour after hour—one eye fixed on some dirty, wise old book while the other watched the various schemes and scampings of his quondam pupils—until the fading rays of the setting sun and the shrill screams of the sea-birds warned master and scholar of the coming night.

Every one agreed that Master Ben was very learned, but how he became so was what nobody could tell: some said (for there are scandalmongers in every village) that, long ago, Master Ben's father was convicted of treasonable practices, and obliged to fly to "foreign parts" to save his life; his child was the companion of his wanderings, according to this statement. But there was another, far more probable,—that our dominie had been a poor scholar—a class of students peculiar, I believe, to Ireland, who travel from province to province, with satchels on their backs, containing books, and whatever provisions are given them, and devote their time to study and begging. The poorest peasant will share his last potato with a wandering scholar, and there is always a couch of clean straw prepared for him in the warmest corner of an Irish cabin. Be these surmises true or false, everybody allowed that Master Ben was the most clever schoolmaster between Bannow and Dublin: he

would correct even Father Sinnott, "on account o' the bog Latin his reverence used at the altar itself." "His reverence" always took this in good part, laughed at it, but never omitted adding, slyly, "The poor crathur!—he thinks he knows better than me!" I must say that the laugh which concluded this sentence was much more joyous than that at the commencement.

The dominie's life passed very smoothly, and with apparent comfort;—strange as it may sound to English ears—comfort. A mild, half-witted sister, who might be called his shadow—so silently and calmly did she follow his steps, and do all that could be done to make the only being she loved happy—shared his dwelling. The potatoes she planted, dug, and picked with her own hands; milked and tended "Nanny" and "Jenny," two pretty, merry goats, who not only devoured the wild heather and fragrant thyme which literally cover the sandbanks and hills of Bannow, but made sundry trespasses on the flower-beds at the "great house," and defied pound, tether, and fetter with the most roguish and provoking impudence. I had almost forgotten—but she small-plaited in a superior and extraordinary manner; and—poor thing!—she was as vain of that qualification as any lady who rumbles over the keys of a grand piano and then triumphantly informs the audience that she has played "The Storm."

"Changeful are all the scenes of life," says somebody or other; and when I was about ten years

old, Master Ben underwent two very severe trials—trials the poor man never anticipated: one was teaching, or trying to teach, me the multiplication table—an act no mortal man (or woman either) ever could accomplish; the other was—falling in love. As Master Ben was the best arithmetician in the county, he was the person fixed on to instruct me in the most puzzling science—no small compliment, I assure you—and he was obliged to arrange, so as to leave his pupils twice a week for two long hours. Master Ben rose in estimation surprisingly when this was known; and, on the strength of it, got twopence instead of three-halfpence a week from his best scholars: he thought he should also gain credit by his new pupil's progress. How vain are man's imaginings! From the first intimation I received of the intended visits of my tutor, I felt a most lively anticipation of much fun and mischief.

"Now, Miss dear, don't be full o' yer tricks," said pretty Peggy O'Dell, who had the especial care of my person. "Now, Miss dear, stand asy—you won't?—well, then, I'll not tell ye the news—no, not a word! Oh, ye're asy now, are ye! Well, then—to-morrow, Frank tells me, Master Ben is to come to tache you the figures; and good rason has Frank to know, for he druv the carriage to Master Ben's own house, and hard the mistress say all about it; and that was the rason ye were left at home, mavourneen, with your own Peggy; because the ladies wished to keep it all sacret like, till they'd

tell ye their own selves. Oh, Miss dear, asy—asy—till I tie yer sash!—there now—now you may run off; but stay one little minit—take kindly to the figures. I know you can't abide them now, but I hear they are main useful; and take to it asy—*as quiet as you can*. Master Ben has fine larning, and expicts much credit for tacheing the likes of you. And why not?"

Poor Benjamin!—he certainly did stride to the Manor, and into the study, next morning; and, in due time, I worked through, that is, I wrote out the questions, and copied the sums, with surprising dexterity, in "numeration," "addition of integers," "compound subtraction," and entered the "single rule of three direct," with much *éclat*. My book was shown, divested of its blots by my kind master's enduring knife; and even my cousin (the only arithmetician in the family) was compelled to acknowledge that, if I did the sums myself, I was a very good girl indeed. That *if* destroyed my reputation. I had too much honour to tell a story.

What a passion, to be sure, the dominie got into the next day, when informed of my disgrace! I cannot bear to see a long, thin man in a passion to this very hour; there is nothing on earth like it, except a Lombardy poplar in a storm. However, if poor Master Ben was tormented in the study by me, he was more tormented in the servants' hall by pretty Peggy.

Peggy was exactly a lively Irish coquette: such merry, twinkling black eyes; such white teeth,

which were often exposed by the loud and joyous laugh that extended her large but well-formed mouth ; and such a bounding, lissom figure, always (no small merit in an Irish lassie) neatly, if not tastefully, arrayed. She was an especial favourite with my dear grandmother, who had been her patron from early childhood ; and Peggy fully and highly valued herself on this account. Then she could read and write in her own way ; wore lace caps, with pink and blue bows ; and, as curls were interdicted, braided her raven locks with much care and attention.

The smartest, prettiest girl, at wake or pattern, for ten miles round, was certainly Peggy O'Dell ; and many lovers had she ; from Thomas Murphy of the Hill (the richest), who had a cow, six pigs, and all requisites to make a woman happy, according to his own account, to Wandering Will (the poorest), who, though not five-and-twenty, had been a jovial sailor, a brave soldier, a capital fiddler, a very excellent cobbler, a good practical surgeon (he had performed several very clever operations as a dentist and bone-setter, I assure you), and, at last, settled as universal assistant in the Manor-house, cleaned the carriage and horses with Frank, waited at table with Dennis, helped Martha to carry home the milk, instructed Peter Kean how to train vines in the Portuguese fashion (which foreign treatment had so ill an effect on our poor Irish vines that, to Wandering Will's eternal disgrace, they withered and died—a circumstance honest Peter

never failed to remind him of, whenever he presumed to suggest any alteration in horticultural arrangements), had the exclusive care of the household brewing, and was even detected in assisting old Margaret hunting the round meadow for eggs, which the obstinate lady-fowl preferred hiding among brakes and bushes to depositing, in a proper manner, in the hen-house. Moreover, Will was "the jewel" of all the county during the hunting and shooting season—knew all the fox-earths, and defied the simple cunning of hare and partridge; made love to all the pretty girls in the village; and, as he was handsome, notwithstanding the loss of one of his beautiful eyes, everybody said that no one would refuse William, were he even as poor again as he was—an utter impossibility. The rumour spread, however, that his wandering affections were actually settled into a serious attachment for Peggy; but who Peggy was in love with was another matter. She jested with everybody, and laughed more at Master Ben than at any one else; she was always delighted when an opportunity occurred of playing off droll tricks to his disadvantage; and some of her jokes were so practical that the housekeeper frequently threatened to inform her mistress of her pranks. Master Ben was always the first to prevent this; and his constant remonstrance, "Mistress Betty, let the innocent cratur alone, she manes no harm; she knows I don't mind her youthful fun—the cratur!" saved Peggy many a reproof.

One morning I had been more than ordinarily

inattentive; and my tutor, perplexed, or, as he termed it, "fairly bothered," requested to speak to my grandmother. When she granted him audience, he stammered and blundered in such a manner that it was quite impossible to ascertain what he wanted to speak about; at length out it came—"He had saved a good pinny o' money, and thought it time to settle in life."

"Settle, Mister Benjamin!—why, I always thought you were a settled, sober man. What do you mean?" inquired my grandmother.

"To get married, ma'am," rousing all his energies to pronounce the fatal sentence.

"Married?" repeated my grandmother,—"*married!*—you, Benjamin Rattin, married at your time of life!—and to whom?"

"I was only eight-and-forty, madam," he replied (drawing himself up), "my last birthday; and, by your lave, I mane to marry Peggy O'Dell."

"Peggy!—you marry Peggy!" She found it impossible to maintain the sober demeanour necessary when such declarations are made. "Mister Benjamin, Peggy is not twenty, gay and giddy as a young fawn; and, I must confess, I should not like her to marry for four or five years. Now, as you certainly cannot wait all that time, I think you ought to think of some one else."

"Your pardon, madam; she is my first, and shall be my last, love. And I know," added the dominie, looking modestly on the carpet, "that she has a tinderness for me."

"What! Peggy a tenderness for you!—poor child!—quite impossible!" said my grandmother; "she never had the tenderness you mean for any living man, I'll answer for it;" and the bell was rung to summon Miss Peggy to the presence.

She entered—blushed and simpered at the first questions put to her: at last my grandmother deliberately asked her if she had given Mister Ben encouragement at any time—and this she most solemnly denied.

"Oh, you hard-hearted girl you!—did you ever cease laughing from the time I came in till I went out o' the house? Weren't you always smiling at me, and playing your pranks, and——"

"Stop!" said Peggy, at once assuming a grave and serious manner,—“stop! Maybe I laughed too much—but I shall cry more, if”—(and she fell on her knees at my grandmother's feet)—“if ye don't forgive me, mistress dear,—almost the first, certainly the last, time I shall ever offend you.”

“Child, you have not angered me,” replied my grandmother, who saw her emotion with astonishment.

“Oh yes; but I know best—I have—I have—I know I have!—but I'll never do so more—never—never!” and she burst into a flood of tears. Poor Master Ben stood aghast.

“Speak,” said my grandmother, almost bewildered; “speak, and at once—what have you done?”

“Oh! he over-persuaded me, and said ye'd never

consint till it was done ; and so we were married, last night, at Judy Ryan's station."

"Married ! to whom, in the name of wonder ?"

"Oh, Willy—Wandering Willy ; but he'll never wander more : he'll be tame and steady, and, to the last day of his life, he'll sarve you and yours ; and only forgive me, your poor Peggy, that ye saved from want, and that 'll never do the like again—no, never !" The poor girl clasped her hands imploringly, but did not dare to look her mistress in the face. My grandmother rose and left the room ; she was much offended : nor could it be denied that Peggy's conduct was highly improper. The child of her bounty, she had acted with duplicity, and married a man whose unsteady habits promised little for her comfort.

Poor Master Ben !—lovers' sorrows furnish abundant themes for jest and jesters : but they are not the less serious, on that account, to those immediately concerned in *les affaires du cœur*. When he heard the confession that she was truly married, he looked at her for a few minutes, and then quitted the house, determined never to enter it again. Peggy and her husband were dismissed ; but a good situation was soon procured for Will, as commander of a small vessel that traded from Waterford to Bannow with corn, coal, timber, "and sundries." Contrary to all expectation, he made a kind and affectionate husband.

Winter had nearly passed, and Peggy almost ceased to dread the storms that scatter so many

wrecks along our frowning coast. Her little cabin was a neat, cheerful dwelling, in a sheltered nook; and often, during her husband's absence, did she go forth to look out upon the ocean-flood—

"With not a sound beside, except when flew
Aloft the lapwing, or the grey curlew,"

and gaze and watch for his sail on the blue waters. On the occasion to which I refer he had been long expected home; and many of the rich farmers, who used coal instead of turf, went down to the pier to inquire if the *Pretty Peggy* (so Will called his boat) had come in. The wind was contrary, but as the weather was fair, no one thought of danger. Soon the little bark hove in sight, and soon was Peggy at the pier, watching for his figure on deck, or for the waving of hat or handkerchief, the beloved token of recognition; but no such token appeared. The dreadful tale was soon told. Peggy, about to become a mother, was already a widow.

Will had fallen overboard in endeavouring to secure a rope that had slipped from the side of his vessel; the night was dark, and one deep, heavy splash alone knelled the departure of poor Wandering Willy.

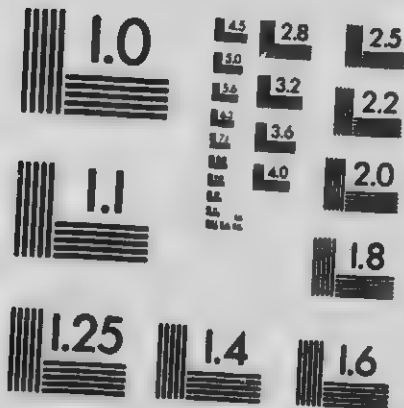
Peggy, forlorn and desolate, suffered the bitter pains of childbirth, and in a few hours expired—her heart was broken.

About five years after this melancholy event, I was rambling amongst the tombs and ruins of the



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venerable church of Bannow. Every stone of that old pile is hallowed to my remembrance; its bleak situation, the barren sandhills that surround it, and—

"The measured chime, the thundering burst,"

of the boundless ocean, always rendered it, in my earliest days, a place of grand and overpowering interest. Even now—

"I miss the voice of waves—the first
That awoke my childhood's glee,"

and often think of the rocks and cliffs and blue sea that first led my thoughts "from nature up to nature's God."

I looked through the high-arched window into the churchyard, and observed an elderly man, kneeling on one knee, employed in pulling up the docks and nettles that overshadowed an humble grave, under the south wall. A pale, delicate little girl quietly and silently watched all he did; and when no offensive weed remained, carefully scattered over it a large nosegay of fresh flowers, and, instructed by the aged man, knelt on the mound and lisped a simple prayer to the memory of her mother.

It was, indeed, my old friend, "Master Ben"; the pale child he had long called his—it was the orphan daughter of William and Peggy. His love was not the love of worldlings; despite his outward man, it was pure and unsophisticated: it pleased God to give him the heart to be a father to the

fatherless. The girl is now the blessing of his old age ; and, as he has long since given up his school, he finds much amusement in instructing his adopted child, who, I understand, has already made great progress in his favourite science of numbers.

MOYNA BRADY

OR

IRISH "LUCK"

"WELL, ma'am dear, I never thought yer going into foreign parts would make a heathen of ye intirely. To be sure it turns the mind a little to leave one's own people; but to shift that way against what the world knows to be true—true as gospel! It's myself that couldn't even it to you, at all at all—so I couldn't—if I hadn't heard it with my own ears!"

"I assure you, Moyna, you are very much mistaken in imagining that the whole world adopts your notions of predestination, for——"

"I ax yer pardon for interrupting ye, my lady; but I said nothing at all about pra-pra—I can't twist my tongue round the word," continued Moyna; adding, with that exuberant vanity which prevents the Irish from ever pleading guilty to the sin of ignorance—"not but I've often heard it before."

"Predestination means what you call luck—a

thing you believe you cannot avoid—a sort of spirit that deals out to you good or evil—in defiance of your own wishes.”

Moyna looked puzzled — exceedingly puzzled. She knocked the ashes out of her pipe against the post, originally intended to support a gate, which, according to Moyna’s reading, “her luck” had prevented from being either made or hung; and stuffing her middle finger into the bowl of the little puffing medium, so as to ascertain that no hidden fire remained in its recess, she returned it to her pocket, clasped her hands so as to grasp the post within their palms, and, leaning against it, one foot crossed over the instep of the other, she turned her head a little round, and called to her husband by the familiar but affectionate appellation of “Tim, avourneen!” “Tim,” or to speak correctly, Timothy Brady, made his appearance from beneath the roof of a picturesque but most comfortless dwelling—a cottage that would have looked delightful in a painted landscape—a matter essentially different from a delightful cottage in reality. Nothing could be more beautiful than the surrounding scenery—wood and water, hill and dale, a bold mountain in the distance, a blue sky overhead, the turrets of a lofty castle shining among the woods, and the lawns and shrubberies of another, extending to the little patch of common, on which seven or eight huts, similar in appearance to my poor friend’s dwelling, were congregated. The lord of the one mansion imported his own

mutton into England, and the master of the other assured his London friends that his agent assured him "that the peasantry was the finest peasantry on the face of the earth." But neither the one nor the other had anything to do with my poor cottar and his wife, for it was many years since they had visited their estates. Had it been otherwise, Timothy and Moyna must have thought more wisely and acted more discreetly.

Timothy Brady differed in nothing from the generality of his countrymen, except that he was "better larned," for he could read and write, and, when a lad, was in great esteem as a "mass server," and noted as being "remarkable handsome at the altar." I had not seen him for some time, and was struck with the painful change which a few years had made in his fine athletic form. Moyna had ever been a careless, affectionate "slob of a girl," who would "go from Bantry to Boyne to serve me, on her bare knees," but had little idea of serving herself. Such a character is not improved by age; but there was a time when I had hoped a better fate for Timothy. His sunken eye became bright and animated when he saw one who had rendered him some service, and he pulled up his stockings over his bare legs with that striking regard to propriety which an Irish peasant rarely forgets in the presence of a female. After the usual civilities had passed, Moyna commenced:—

"The lady's at me agin about the luck; and

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INCONVENIENCES OF A SINGLE LIFE

From a Painting by
ERSKINE NICOL, R.S.A.



now, maybe, she'll have the goodness to say what she said awhile ago."

"I told your wife that predestination is what she calls luck, and that she would agree very well with the Turks."

"The Turks!" repeated Moyna, throwing up her hands and eyes in horror. "Oh, ma'am honey, I never thought you'd even the Turks to one of your own country! Oh Tim! Tim! was I like a Turk when I sat by your bed, night and day, while ye had the typhus fever? Was I like a Turk when I took Mary Clooney's child from off the dead breast of its mother, and she kilt at the same time by that very fever that kilt her husband? Was I like a Turk when I took the bed, that was no bed, only a lock o' straw, from under me, that blind Barry might die dacent and asy, in consideration of the high family that owned him? Was I like a Turk when——"

"Moyna, will ye whisht, woman dear? You have no understanding; the lady only meant that you and the Turks had different names for the same thing. Wasn't that it?"

I bowed and smiled.

"Was that it? Och, bother! to be sure we have different names. I ax yer pardon; but I think ye said I'd agree with the Turks?"

"Yes, good Moyna, in one thing—you believe in luck, and so do they."

Moyna was appeased, and Timothy took up the matter.

"There's no denying luck, nor no going against it, lady dear, that's the short and the long of it. It's my luck never to make as much by anything as another man. Why, the boneen we reared from the size o' my hand, that Darby Cobb offered me any money for at Candlemas, caught cold and died at Easter—sorra a man on the common had the luck to lose a pig but myself!"

"How did it catch cold?"

"Out of nothing in the world but my luck. It was used, poor thing, to sleep in the cabin with ourselves, as the sty had no roof; but a neighbour's child was sick, and my woman axed some of the family in, and the pig was forced, out of manners, to give up his bed and sleep in the sty, which, as it had no roof, let in the rain. And it was mournful to hear the wheezing he had in the morning, and to see him turn his back on the pick of the mealy potatoes just before he died.

"Well, Timothy, I should call that mismanagement. I do not see either good or bad luck in the case; for it is clear that if the sty had been roofed the pig would not have been accustomed to cottage warmth, and, consequently, could not have caught cold."

"Well, lady, listen; it was my luck intirely that hindered my roofing the sty. I'll tell ye all about it. Did ye know Tom Dooly? Sorra a hand's turn he'd do from Monday morning till Saturday night, barring the height of mischief. Ye didn't know Tom? Well, ma'am, I'm sure ye mind his

brother Micky—'one-eyed Mick,' he was called, because he as good as lost the other in a bit of a spree at the fair of Rathmullin, and could get no justice for it."

"No justice for the spree, do you mean, Timothy?"

"No, ma'am; I mean, no justice for his eye—clearly proving there's no law for the poor, God help them! The boy he fought with was as good as thirty years older than himself—a tough old fellow, with a crack-stick skull that nothing could harm. So Mick know'd that, and he never offered at the head, but the shins, which he broke as complate as anything you ever saw. And so the magistrate set the ould boy's shins against Micky's eye, and bid them make it up. Ah, there's no law for the poor, at all at all."

"But, Timothy, let us get back to where we set out—the pig-sty."

"Troth, yes," returned Tim, "though I'm sorry to take a lady to a dirty subject. Tom Dooly says to me, says he, 'Tim, ye're in want of a lock of straw to keep the heavens out of the piggery.' 'I am,' says I. 'Well,' says he, 'come over to me; I've a lot of as fine barley-straw as ever danced under a flail, and ye shall have it just for thank ye.' 'God bless ye, and good luck to you and yours, Misther Tom,' says I, 'good luck to you and yours for ever, Amin!' 'And when 'ill you look over for it?' says he. 'To-morrow, for sartin,' says I. 'Very good; to-morrow, by all means,' says he; 'and make my respects to the woman that owns

ye.' Now, ma'am dear, mind the luck ; something or other hindered Moyna from taking my brogues to the brogue-maker's to be mended that night, so I couldn't go the next day, and that very evening a great splinter ran into my foot out of the spade-handle."

"Stop, my good friend. If the spade-handle was splintered, why did you not mend it?"

"Ma'am dear, that was a way you had, ever and always, tripping a body up in their story. Sure I did mend—that is, I eased it with a bit of a cord ; but it was my luck hindered me, and the bad foot, from going the day after that ; and one thing or another came across me, until it was just a week before I could go for the straw. Well, the black boy himself put it into my head to borrow Matthew Maccan's white mare. 'Take her, and welcome,' says Matty ; 'but mind, if you put yourself or anything else on her, she'll kick till she smashes every bone in your body, though she'll draw a creel or a cart till the day of judgment, as easy as May butter.' 'Thank ye kindly, Matthew,' says I, 'I'll mind fast enough ;' and away I went. And at his own gate I saw Tom, as grand as Cromwell, with his hands in his pockets, and a silk Barcelona round his neck, like any gentleman. To be sure, the luck of some people ! 'Good evening, Tim,' says he. 'Good evening kindly,' says I. 'Where are you going with Mat Maccan's beast ?' says he. 'No farther than this,' says I, 'until I go home again.' 'I'm always glad to see an ould

friend; but why didn't ye come,' says he again, 'for the barley-straw?' 'Sure I'm come for it now,' says I. 'You are?' says he, opening his great grey eyes at me, like a wild cat. 'Sorra as much of it for ye, then, as would build a sparrow's nest,' said the traitor; 'if ye'd been glad of it ye might have come when you was bid to come, and not let a whole week rowl over your head. I gave the straw to Jemmy Hatchet, and by this time it's no straw at all, but a roof, and a good one too, to his sty, and his naie clane barn.' 'It's ill done of ye,' says I, as cool as a cabbage-leaf, though my blood was boilin' at the ill luck that follows me; 'ye might have waited—but never heed;' and I turned the horse round to come home. 'Sure,' says he, 'ye're not going to stir ill-blood out of the offer I made ye from kindness; if ye did not take advantage of it, it was your fault, not mine.' Well, I didn't value the straw a traneeen, ma'am dear, I've a spirit above it; but I did not like his bestowing his dirty straw upon Jemmy Hatchet; so I makes answer, 'Do ye say I'm in fault?' 'To be sure I do,' he says, with a grin of a laugh. 'Then by this and by that,' I says, swearing a great whale of an oath, that I'd be sorry to repeat before a lady, 'I'll make ye eat both the words and the straw.' 'Ye can't,' says he, 'and what's more ye darn't; ain't I the priest's nephy?' Well, that would rouse the blood of a wood-queest, for it was cowardly like; and, as my luck would have it, I hot him an unlucky blow, and a dale of sorrow it got me into, for

I had the world and all of pinance, to say nothing of being had up, and he swearing he gave no provocation. For sartin, I didn't mean to have struck so hard, and didn't think his bones were so soft. But that wasn't all of it: going home—the trouble of what I had done uppermost—I forgot what Mat had said about the horse, and got on the baste's back, who made no more ado but kicked, and plunged, and pitched me into the thick of a pond full of young ducks and geese; and two ganders set upon me and as good as tore the eyes out of my head before I could get out of the water; and I had to pay two-and-three-halfpence for the young that was killed in the scrimmage. And well I know it's long afore such luck would have followed any other boy in the parish but myself. Now, ma'am dear, isn't that luck?"

"Is your story finished, Tim?"

"It just is, ma'am darlint—the story is finished; but I could tell ye twenty as good, and better too, to show what ill-luck I have."

"There is no luck, ill or well, that I can see, from beginning to end. Your misfortunes entirely arose out of your want of punctuality. Had your shoes been mended, as they ought to have been, you could have gone for the straw with comfort on the evening you appointed. Still, their not being mended was no excuse for your want of punctuality. You put me in mind of an anecdote I once heard of two Irishmen, who were too lazy to pluck the figs that hung over their heads in a beautiful garden in Italy.

There they lay on their backs—beneath a tree covered with fruit, their mouths open for the figs to fall into. At last a fig, by what you would call 'luck,' fell into the mouth of one of these Irishmen. 'What a lucky dog you are, Paddy!' said the other, opening his mouth still more widely. 'I don't know that, Looney,' replied Paddy, after swallowing the fig, 'for I have had the trouble of chewing it!'

"Agh, ma'am honey! I wonder you have the heart to tell such stories against your own country, letting the foreigners laugh at us that way."

"Listen, Timothy; how would your own case read? Timothy Brady was indicted for an assault on Mister Thomas Dooly, who swore that he told the aforesaid Timothy Brady that if he came to him on the evening of the first of May he would make him a present of a load of straw to thatch his pig-sty; that Brady promised to come, but never came until the seventh of May, and, in the meantime, he, Thomas Dooly, thinking that Brady did not mean to thatch his pig-sty, had given the load of straw to an industrious man, who did thatch his pig-sty; that, when Brady found the straw had been given, he, without any provocation——"

"Oh, asy, ma'am dear, you forget the laugh."

"And who could help laughing?—without any provocation, did assault the said Thomas Dooly! Now is it not so worthy Timotheus?"

Reasoning with the Irish on this subject is pretty much like attempting to swim against the stream

of a powerful river. You catch some little turn or current, and you think you have them there. No such thing. Away they go the next moment.

Moyna now took up the subject. "Sure, ma'am, you must allow what happened to Milly Boyle was luck, poor thing!—she'd as bad luck as her neighbours, and worse too, but she could not go past what was before her."

"Milly Boyle,—I remember her,—a blue-eyed, fair-haired girl."

"With rosy cheeks and a smile always ready to coax them into dimples. Ah, ma'am, she was the pride of the whole village. And her poor mother—and she a widdy—doated on her as no mother doated on a child before or since, to my thinking. Then her voice was as clear as a bell, and as sweet as a lamb's; and though she had forty pounds to her fortune, beside furniture, a feather-bed, and a cow, to say nothing of the pigs and powers of fowl and lashings of meal and cutlings,—sure her uncle big Larry Boyle was a miller,—though she had all them things, she was as humble as a wild violet, and to the poor was ever ready with a soft word and a 'God save ye kindly,' and her hand in her pocket, and out with a fivepenny-bit, or a tester; or would think nothing of lapping her cloak round her, and away to any sick woman, or poor craythur of a man, that 'ud be ailing, and give them the grain of tea, or the bit of tobacco, or taste of snuff to comfort them; and the prayer of the countryside was, 'Good luck to Milly Boyle!' To be sure, if

she hadn't the bachelors, no girl ever had—shoals of 'em watching for her coming out of chapel, or from the station, or the wake, as it might be, way-laying her, as a body may say; and though she was main civil to them all, and smiles were as plenty and as sweet with her as harvest berries, yet it was long before she laid her mind to any, until her fancy fixed on Michael Laughton, one of the best boys in the barony. Handsome and well-to-do in the world was Michael, and every one was rejoiced at her luck. Well, the day was fixed for the wedding, and even the poor mother thanked God on her knees, and offered a cock to St. Martin, and a box of real wax-candles to the Virgin—her blessing be about us for ever and ever, Amen! And the evening before, Michael and Milly were walking down by the river at the bottom of the common, and Milly spied a bunch of wild roses langing over the stream, and she took a fancy to the flowers; and to be sure Mike made a spring at them. But his luck took the footing from under him, and—Lord save us! the boy was drowned in the sight of her eyes. But the worst of the woe is to come. She got a brain fever out of the trouble, and the fever scorched up her brain so that there was no sense left in it, though her heart was as warm as ever. And then she used to go rambling about the counthry with her hands crossed on her breast, and her eyes evermore wandering; and if—and if she'd hear a cry or a moan, she'd run to see if she could do anything to lighten the trouble;

and yet she had no sense left to know how to set about it. And oh, ma'am dear, the mother of her! To see that poor woman fading away from off the face of the earth, and following her as if she was her shadow! 'twas the hardest luck I ever saw."

"And what became of poor Milly?"

"The worst of luck, if it's as long as a midsummer's day, must have an end—and so, ma'am dear, Milly died. And it was quare, too, she was found dead under a wild-rose tree. I often heard they were unlucky things. There she was, and I have heard them that found her tell that it was a beautiful, melancholy sight to see her—her cheek resting on her arm as if she was asleep, and ever so many rose leaves scattered by nature like over her whole face."

"And her mother?"

"Oh, ma'am, they say ould hearts are tough; but if it's true, sorrow can tear them to pieces. The two were buried in the same grave."

Moyna's story moved me much; I wished them both a kind good morrow, and had nearly arrived at the village where we lodged when, panting and breathless, she overtook me.

"What's the matter, Moyna?"

"Oh, the man has the toothache so bad that I'm forced to run for a pipe; the smoking does it good. And by the same token, the stump of the doodeen never has *the luck* to last him long."

"How so?"

"Why, he ates such a power of sugar-candy, it destroys the pipes all as one as the teeth."

"Then why does he eat the sugar-candy?"

"'Twas the luck of the family to murder themselves with sugar; they had an aunt or something, onct—long-iver-ago—with a sugar plantation."

"Indeed! Then he has no pipe?"

"We had, ma'am, but he lent it to Briney Mahon."

"But I saw you put a pipe in your pocket not twenty minutes ago."

"So you might, ma'am dear; that's my luck. It would have stayed quiet and easy in anybody else's pocket; but there was a hole in mine, so it walked out, and broke, without so much as by yer leave."

"Why did you not mend the hole?"

"Faith, ma'am, honey, if I did it would break out again," said Moyna, with some impatience of tone and gesture. "Where's the good of mending anything when we've no luck."

Poor Moyna! she would have been very angry had she known that I again compared her to the Turks, and was more than ever satisfied that, till belief in such weak fatalism is destroyed, poor Ireland will "have no luck!"

